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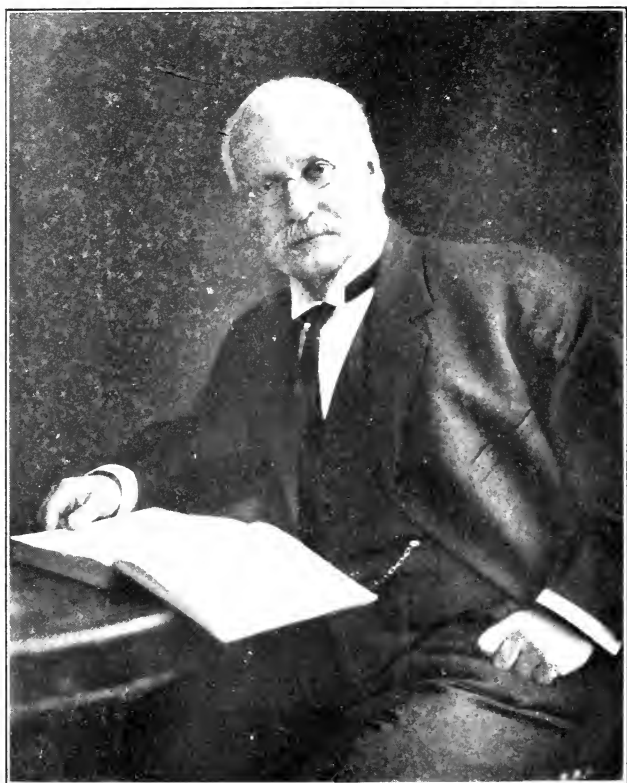
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THE
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OR
THE FOUNDATIONS OF OUR FAITH

BY
DAVID JAMES BURRELL, D.D., LL.D.,
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PART I

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THE OLD-TIME RELIGION

OR
THE FOUNDATIONS OF OUR FAITH

PART I—RELIGION

A DEFINITION

Origin of the word.—The quest.—Four characteristics.
—Not a creed.—Not a liturgy.—Not a confession.
—The two hemispheres: Doing good, being good.—
Religion impossible without Christ.

Origin of the word.—The word religion is said to come from *religare*, meaning “to bind back.” We were created in the likeness of God but have somehow become alienated from him. As the planets were made to move obediently in their orbits, so we were made to live in harmony with divine law; but, alas, we have “transgressed,” that is, crossed the line. In so doing we have exiled ourselves from God, like planets swept out of their orbits into lawless space. We have sinned; and without holiness “no man shall see the Lord.” The question of all questions now is: How can we be restored to him?

If this be so, the search for religion is the noblest that can engage our energies. But where shall we find it? Take heed; for there are fabrications many and diverse counterfeits passing current under that name. The test is a simple one. A genuine religion must do what it proposes to do; that is, it must bind the soul of the sinner back to God.

The quest.—For our guidance in this quest we have the Bible. It is a revelation or “unveiling” of God as the Saviour of men. As such it is authoritative and trustworthy, having been written by men who “spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit.” 2 Peter 1:21.

And for our further guidance we have Christ, the only-begotten Son of God; as it is written, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God; . . . and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” We perceive him walking through the Scriptures, from the first prophecy in Eden to the last vision of the Apocalypse, as the teacher of religion. This was the theme of his ministry on earth. The religion which he set forth is called “The ministry of reconciliation,” because it presents a definite plan for the recovery of our lost estate. The man who accepts it is homeward bound.

Four characteristics.—The religion thus outlined in the written and incarnate Word is defined by the Apostle James: “Pure religion and unde-

filed before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction and to keep oneself unspotted from the world." James 1:27. Now James was the utilitarian among the apostles. He was a theologian with a clear eye to the needs of practical life. The religion which he thus defined is marked by four characteristics. It is not one among many, but the only one. It is "pure and undefiled"; that is, not a mixture of truth and error, but absolutely faultless every way. It is acceptable to God. There are many systems of faith and conduct which commend themselves to various classes of men; but the true religion is that which passes muster before the Holy One. It does what it proposes to do; that is, it binds the sinner back to God.

By this definition of Religion three things are ruled out as non-essential and two are counted in. As to the things which are ruled out, James intimates that religion is

Not a creed.—A creed is necessary as a symbol of faith; nevertheless a man may be orthodox and not religious at all. A man without a creed is an invertebrate: but a man with a creed and nothing else is a lifeless automaton: because "as he thinketh within himself so is he." A creed is like a physician's prescription—a paper full of zigzag characters, having no value except as it stands for something. It is not the paper, but the thing which it stands for, that must be taken inwardly to effect a cure.

Not a liturgy.—Rites and ceremonies are important; but they are not the essential thing. They are, as Salter says, “the aliment of religion but not its life, the fuel but not the flame, the scaffolding but not the edifice.” They are like the vial into which the apothecary puts the prescription; it is necessary, yet of no value whatever except for what it holds. To place one’s confidence in the saving power of the Church and its sacraments is as vain as it would be for a patient to expect to be cured of a mortal malady by the application of the vial rather than by the remedy within it.

Not a confession.—Such a confession is important; for is it not written, “With the heart man believeth unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation”? The man who imagines himself to be a Christian without coming out into the open may well question the sincerity of his faith and the validity of his hope. An open confession is like the label on the vial. The law requires it, because there is no telling what mistakes might occur without it. But the label has no value except as it describes something. Lip-service has a place in religion only so far as the lips serve the heart, the heart being true to truth and righteousness.

Now these are the things which religion is not. They are necessary as indications and concomitants of religion; but they are only the shadows of it. Where is the substance, the essential thing, by

which the soul is healed, as when medicine—the medicine called for by the prescription, contained in the vial and duly labelled—being taken into the system finds its way into blood and sinew and expresses itself in terms of physical life?

The two hemispheres of religion as set forth by James, are doing good and being good. And it is characteristic of this apostle of the practical life that he puts the former before the latter, unselfishness before self, beneficence being the keynote of character.

The doing good is expressed in the words “to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction.”

The world is full of such needy and helpless ones; and our relation to them was indicated by our Lord in clearest terms when he said, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me.”

It is related of Palmaris, a devotee of the twelfth century, that in token of repentance he set out from his home at Piacenza on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. He had not proceeded far, however, when his Lord appeared to him in a vision, saying, “I care not for thy pious pilgrimage. There are widows and fatherless at Piacenza who need thee; go back and visit them!” He was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, the legend says, but returning to his native town founded charitable institutions which have preserved his name in the odor of sanctity to this day.

It is clear, however, that the visitation of the widows and the fatherless is merely a specific term used to designate a general duty. The reference is to all unselfish service. Sin is self-seeking: the first step Godward is out of self into self-sacrifice. He who would be greatest in the Kingdom of God must be servant of all.

But, judged by this criterion, where is the perfectly religious man? Did ever one live in this world who so far forgot himself as to give himself wholly and unreservedly for his fellow-men? Yes, one. He stands alone as the religious exemplar of the ages. He came not to be ministered unto but to minister. He was everybody's friend. He forgot himself in remembering others. He heard the cry of the friendless in the porches of Bethesda; he healed the sicknesses of those who were laid on couches along the way. Ministry was his meat and drink. His life is comprehended in a brief sentence, "He went about doing good." Its end was at Golgotha; where, in the one mighty deed of self-sacrifice which set the pattern of beneficence for all succeeding ages, he "tasted death for every man." This is the hemisphere of religion on its manward side. Let that mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus. "To do good and to communicate forget not."

The being good is expressed in the words "and to keep oneself unspotted from the world."

But just there is the difficulty. How shall one

keep oneself unspotted from the world? The spot is there! Among all the children of men there is not one who does not realize it. The "damned spot," as Lady Macbeth calls it, is there and, despite all earth's purgings, it is there to stay. "All great Neptune's ocean cannot wash it clean." How vain to speak or even think of "keeping oneself unspotted from the world" while that remains, the ineradicable stain of sin!

The first thing to be done, obviously, is to get rid of that spot. Is it possible? Do you know of anything that can wash it out? In all the religions of the world, save one, there is no suggestion of any means of doing it. The only plan which has ever been intimated is that which points to the Cross, saying, "Come now and let us reason together, saith Jehovah; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow, though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." A man who is truly in quest of religion will not be satisfied with any which does not effect this purging. And if he is really sincere and in earnest, he will fall in with the one "pure and undefiled religion" which proposes to do it. Here is the proposition: "The blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin."

" There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains."

The fact, however, that a fountain has been opened for uncleanness has obviously no value except for such as take advantage of it. The remission of sins is offered "without money and without price"; but it remains for the sinner to appropriate it. The fountain is there; he must wash and be clean. This means that Christ must be believed in; as it is written, "He that believeth in the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved." He that so believeth is already saved, here and now. His sin is forgiven and his iniquity is purged. The spot is gone!

This matter of prime importance having been attended to, all the rest of religion, so far as character is concerned, is "to keep oneself unspotted," that is, to refrain from sin. This is possible in only one way. So long as a man keeps company with Christ he cannot sin. Try it, if you will. Try to do a wrong thing while Christ is walking with you. No man ever did it. Sin becomes possible only when we fling Christ off. It would never have been written that Peter "denied his Lord" had it not been written in a previous sentence that "he followed him afar off." Our Lord has promised to keep those who keep in touch with him. In his sacerdotal prayer he says, "Father, I have kept those whom thou hast given me." That word "kept" is a great word; and the secret of being thus kept is in practising the presence of Christ.

Religion impossible without Christ.—Now this is practical religion, as James defines it. And there

is one inevitable conclusion; namely, *Religion is impossible without Christ*. One may call himself religious, may pay tithes and offer sacrifices and cry "Lord! Lord!" but he has not found that "pure and undefiled religion" which brings the soul back to God unless he has accepted him who said, "I am the way; no man cometh unto the Father but by me." You cannot go around Christ and get back to God. You cannot get rid of the spot without the cleansing of his blood. You cannot keep yourself "unspotted from the world" except as you are "kept" by him. And you cannot practise that unselfish beneficence in default of which religion is but an empty show without following in his steps.

The definition of religion is thus reduced to a single word, namely, Christ. He is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption. He is first, last, midst and all in all.

It is related that a young ruler once came to Jesus saying, "Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?" What he wanted was religion, but where should he find it? Jesus said, "If thou wouldest enter into life, keep the commandments." His answer was, "All these things have I observed. What lack I yet?" He had done his best, but had not found religion. There was something still lacking. Then Jesus, bidding him part with everything that separated betwixt him and the better life, added, "Come, follow me."

This is the sum and substance of religion: to follow Christ. He is "the Way," and the only

Way. All other ways are by-ways. All other leaders are blind leaders of the blind. Wherefore the only religion is the religion of Christ, since this alone can bind a sinner back to God.

THE FALSE RELIGIONS

Apologies for Christianity.—No compromise.—Marks of true religion.—It is of God.—It saves men.—It makes for righteousness.—It is universal.

Apologies for Christianity.—I make no apology for speaking of “the false religions” or of phrasing my subject that way. I am tired of hearing eulogiums on Islam and Buddhism and Confucianism and half-hearted apologies for Christianity, sometimes from men who are in covenant vows to preach and “maintain and defend” the religion of Christ.

I am tired also of hearing it repeated over, over and over with great emphasis that “there are good things in all religions.” Why say a simple and self-evident thing in such a solemn way? Of course there are good things in all religious systems, as there is an element of goodness in almost everything of this world of ours. There is gold not only in quartz but in granite, in old red sandstone, in blue clay, in sand and sea water; but the question is whether it is there in paying quantities or not.

A lot of fine things could easily be said about

Dagon; who was really intended to be a shadowing forth of the true God. He was the national idol of the Philistines; the patron of arts and commerce and agriculture; the center of innumerable hopes and fears. Nevertheless, the sanctuary of the Philistines was not large enough to contain him and the Ark of the Covenant at the same time. 1 Samuel 5 : 1-4.

This is another way of saying that the true religion is exclusive. There is only one God; and there is not room in the universe for more than one. There is only one religion, one Book of ultimate authority as to spiritual things, one Christ and one Cross, one Way of everlasting life.

No compromise.—It follows that there can be no compromise. Our religion is not one among religions, nor the best among them: it is the only one. It was so preached by our Lord Jesus Christ, as when he said, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not, the wrath of God abideth on him"; and, inasmuch as the servant is not greater than his Lord, it must be so preached by those who truly follow him.

In the Calendar of the Roman Church there are two saints canonized for their missionary work. One of them is St. Francis Xavier, who went to Japan in the middle of the sixteenth century to preach the gospel. He found the people so wedded to their idols that his efforts were wholly unavailing. Then he resorted to a compromise, persuad-

ing them to combine their worship of a certain goddess with that of the virgin mother of Christ. What was the result? Now, after the expiration of more than three hundred years, there is said to be a colony of the Japanese people who worship, with all idolatrous rites and ceremonies, an idol whom they call "the goddess Mary."

The other of these missionaries was St. Boniface, who went to Germany on a like errand. He, however, recognized the fact that there can be no compromise between truth and error. On finding it impossible to propagate the gospel without a final and complete severance of the people from their idolatry, he bravely felled the sacred oak of Thor, at peril of his life. What was the result in this case? The people came over to Christ like doves flocking to their windows, and Germany is a Christian nation to-day.

This was in pursuance of the method divinely prescribed for us : as it is written, "What fellowship have righteousness and iniquity? or what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as he hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them; and I will be their God; and they shall be my people. Wherefore come ye out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; and I will receive you."

Marks of true religion.—The true religion is set apart from the false religions by certain marks: by which great chasms, infinite and unbridgeable, are opened up between them.

It is of God.—Our religion is of God; while all others are of man. It comes to us by revelation. There are truths which are generic and intuitive, such as the being of God and the doctrine of immortality; but there are others which could never be clearly known or duly authenticated except by a direct message from God; as, for example, the Atonement, which is the great underlying truth of the religion of Christ. For this, and for an authoritative statement of our religious intuitions also, we are indebted to that direct revelation which is contained in the Bible as the inspired Word of God.

On this point we rest our faith in the great verities. Our last appeal in the settlement of all spiritual problems is not to the Church, nor to our inner consciousness, but to a "Thus saith the Lord." His word is, for us, an end of controversy. "Here I stand; I cannot otherwise; God help me!"

But are there not other so-called sacred books that claim to have come from God? Yes, the Koran, for example. But they cannot and do not seriously undertake to vindicate that claim. The Koran is said to have fallen down out of heaven; but that claim is effectively disposed of by the fact

that the Koran rests on three frightful pillars, to wit: War, Polygamy and Concubinage.

We hear a great deal, in some quarters, about the excellency of the Vedas. Can the Vedas vindicate their claim? Let Max Müller answer, who, as a great Orientalist, should be competent to speak in these premises. When he was translating the literature of the false religions he apologized for expurgating the Vedas, saying that a literal version would have exposed him to indictment under the English law against the circulation of obscene literature!

The Bible, on the contrary, stands prepared to vindicate itself. It challenges criticism and fearlessly affirms its inspiration. And it offers its own definition of inspiration, in the word *theopnustia*, which means "breathed of God." It affirms that it was written by men who "spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit."

It saves men.—The second of the great, unbridgeable chasms by which Christianity is separated from the false religions is the fact that it proposes to save men. It does this by the atonement of the Cross.

In all the other religions and philosophies of the world there is no hint or suggestion of any plan by which the record of the mislived past can be blotted out. And herein lies the supreme argument for the exclusiveness of Christianity as the one true religion. The word means "to bind

back." No religion, therefore, can be a true religion which does not "bind back" or restore the soul to God. That, however, is impossible without the removal of sin; since "without holiness no man shall see God."

I marvel that any professing Christian should undertake a comparison of religions without a presentation of this great differentiating fact. For here is the pre-eminent truth which conclusively proves its divine origin and character. The Cross! The wonderful Cross! The divine Cross! "The Jews ask for signs, and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach," what? Not Christ only, but "Christ crucified; unto Jews a stumbling-block and unto Gentiles foolishness; but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God!"

Ours is the only religion that answers the great question that throbs deep down in the heart of every man, "What shall I do to be saved?"

Ask that of the Hindu and he will answer, "Apavarga"; that being the keynote of Brahmanism; by which he means that the only salvation is in the contemplation of the Infinite until the soul loses its identity in the universal All, as a drop of water is exhaled and, after hanging suspended for a time as vapor in the air, drops finally to be lost forever in the sea.

Ask a Buddhist, "What shall I do to be saved?" and he will answer, "Karma"; that being the keynote of Buddhism. Karma is "the law of conse-

quences," namely, "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap"; and there is no escape from it. "The mills grind slow, but they grind woe."

Ask a Moslem, "What shall I do to be saved?" and he will answer, "Kismet"; that being the keynote of Mohammedanism. It designates "the law of destiny"; that is "What is to be must be; and there is no resisting it." If you ask your Moslem to be more specific, he will point to the teaching of Mohammed where it is written: "When God was about to create man he took a mass of clay; and casting one part upward he cried, 'These to heaven; and I care not!' and casting the other downward he cried, 'These to hell; and I care not!'"

Ask a Confucianist, "What shall I do to be saved?" and he will answer, "There is no salvation except for the present life." This was the teaching of Kung-foo-tse, who said, "If there be a God I know not; and if there be a future, I know not. I only know that we are living here and now and must make the most of it." A man in the interior of China after attending a Christian mission for a while and getting no light, came to the missionary one morning in a happy mood, saying, "I dreamed last night; and now I understand. I seemed to have fallen into a deep pit where I lay helpless and despairing. A priest of Confucius leaned over the edge and said, 'Let me give you some advice, my friend; if you get out of your trouble, never get in again.' A priest of Buddha came and stretched his arm over the edge, saying, 'If you can manage

to climb up so that I can reach you, I will help you out.' Then Christ came; and he climbed down into the pit and carried me out of it." This is precisely what Christ does: he promises to save; he asks only our consent, and then he does it all.

And he saves the whole man, body and soul. Our Lord is not unmindful of the life here and now. When on earth, he fed the hungry and healed the sick who were laid on couches along the way. He expects his disciples to minister to the necessities of the poor and unfortunate; and they are doing it.

The Church is criticised for its indifference to social conditions; but an examination of our Charity Directories will show that the vast majority of our humane enterprises are being carried on by Christian people. There is more power for social reform and benevolent enterprise in the little finger of the Church than in the loins of all secular and spectacular organizations outside of it. Not that we are doing all that we ought to do; only that we are doing so much that it ill becomes outsiders to criticise us. The biography of our Lord was briefly written in the words, "He went about doing good"; and his disciples, though handicapped by the limitations of human imperfection, are following in his steps in making this world a better world to live in.

But we are not blind to the immortal needs of men. The familiar fling at our "other-worldliness" is well taken. We plead guilty to a belief

that, as eternity is longer than time, it behooves us to be getting ready for it. We live forever! Our life here is only an infinitesimal arc of an infinite circle. "Eternity! Eternity! How long art thou!" We are bound in reason to put a right estimate on the relative importance of things. It is a spurious charity that feeds and clothes a man, puts a roof over his head and betters his earthly conditions, and leaves him a homeless and penniless beggar for all eternity. "For what doth it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his life?"

It makes for righteousness.—The third of the great gulfs by which Christianity is separated from other so-called religions is the fact that it makes for righteousness. The salvation which it offers is a salvation unto righteousness; that is, it proposes to bring the whole man into harmony with the benign purposes of God.

It makes men. One of the best definitions of a Christian ever given is that of the scoffer Alexander Pope, who said, "A Christian is the highest style of man." It is not claimed that Christians are what they ought to be; but by the grace of God they are what they are. And, take them by and large, their enemies themselves being witnesses, they stand for the highest type of character.

If that be doubted let us institute a frank comparison. Call a hundred of the best exemplars of the false religions: the best Moslems, and the best

Buddhists—some of those holy Yogees who are found begging by the wayside in India covered with ashes and dung, muttering the cabalistic syllable “Aum” and gazing intently at their thumbs while losing themselves in the Ineffable One—and the best Brahmans and Buddhists—say, those holy Mahatmas whom some of our sweet American women are so fond of, not knowing that they religiously regard a woman as “ten degrees lower than a dog”—and when you have gotten your shining representatives of paganism stand them up in line; and we will take at random a hundred professing Christians from any church in Christendom and abide the issue.

By their fruits ye shall know them. In our religion we have a Creed made up of great spiritual truths, and a Code of Morals which the world receives as a faultless rule of conduct; and between them stands a great Exemplar, the only Man who ever lived who could utter the challenge, “Which of you convicteth me of sin?” of whom all ages and generations have testified, “We find no fault in him at all.” He is our Exemplar, and our rule of conduct is briefly comprehended in the imitation of Christ. The best man in the world is the man who is nearest like him.

And our religion makes nations also. I know of no more convincing argument for the truth of Christianity than a map of the world. Spread it out before you, and draw a line around the nations that profess the religion of Christ. What have

you done? You have shut in truth and virtue, domestic peace and happiness, civil and religious freedom, schools, hospitals, reformatories; in a word, civilization. And by the same token, you have shut out all the false religions and localized them in the regions of darkness and the shadow of death. The charmed circle which you have thus circumscribed is called "Christendom," because it is under the dominance of the gospel of Christ. Is it a mere coincidence that our religion has come down thus through the ages, like Milton's angel of the morning, with institutions of light and mercy springing up on every side?

It is universal.—The fourth of the great differentiating facts of Christianity is its universality. All the false religions are ethnic, intended only for certain nations and adapted only to limited classes of men.

"Christ for the world we sing;
The world to Christ we bring!"

This is the deep, ultimate meaning of the miracle of Pentecost. In an inner court of Jerusalem were come together men of all nations of the known world, "Parthians, and Medes and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, in Judæa and Capadocia, in Pontus and Asia, in Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt and the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and sojourners from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians." The world

was there that day. And, the gift of tongues having been bestowed upon the disciples, the proclamation went out: "For to you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him!"

The gospel, which had been adjusted in the beginning to the progress of coming ages, was also adjusted to the needs of all sorts and conditions of men. It is for philosophers and for simple folk as well, being within the comprehension of all. This is the innermost meaning of that acted parable of Jesus when he took a child upon his knee, saying, "Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein."

The Church is put under commission to execute this world-wide plan. The great propaganda was inaugurated when Jesus said to his disciples on the day of his ascension, "Go ye into all the world and evangelize," even "to the uttermost parts." That commission will not be fully discharged until the gospel has been carried to the last man. We are looking for the coming of Christ to rule from the river unto the ends of the earth. Maranatha! "The Lord cometh!" Let us not forget, however, the significant sign of his coming, which he himself has given us: "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world; and then shall the end come."

These are my reasons for affirming that our re-

ligion is the only religion in the world. It is *spes unica*, "the only hope."

Are we to understand, then, that none of the heathen are saved? I do not say so. It may be that some are able to form a dim conception of an essential Christ from the institution of sacrifice which, for some strange reason, is universally prevalent. Blessed is every man who can interpret the parable of the blood! In one of the poems of Saadi, the Persian, occur these strange, pathetic words:

"Once, as I staggered on the brink of hell,
Above the everlasting fire-flood's awful roar,
God threw his heart before my feet; and stumbling o'er
That obstacle divine, I into heaven fell!"

For my part, I am willing to leave this matter, without speculation, in the hands of a gracious God. I know that he requires no more of any man than that he shall live up to his light; but, when we consider how few there are who meet that requirement in Christian lands, how remote seems the possibility that many of the heathen are saved. We would surely not have been so urgently and imperatively enjoined to give them the message of salvation in Christ were salvation attainable in any other way.

We have Christ and his glorious gospel! And we are required to give that gospel to those who have it not. To all our questioning, not only as to the salvation of some of the heathen, but as to the

relative value of Christianity and the false religions, there is one final and conclusive answer in the words of Jesus himself: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me."

THE OLD-TIME RELIGION

Passing fashions.—The religion of the ages.—Four great underlying principles: A personal God, A self-respecting man, Sin, Salvation.—The old-time religion is abreast of the past, abreast of the present, abreast of the future.—A Temple of Progress.—Above all others.

Passing fashions.—Paul declares that the “fashion of this world passeth away.” The word here rendered “fashion” is *schema*, a technical term which was used in connection with the ancient drama to designate the costumes and properties. “All the world’s a stage and all the men and women merely players.” For a while they wear the garb of the characters they assume; then the curtain falls, the lights are extinguished and the actors are themselves again. So “the fashion of this world passeth away.” There is nothing enduring but the substance of things.

It is easy to make sport of old fashion plates like those in “Godey’s Lady’s Book”: but be it observed there are fashions in other things than dress. There is, for example, a vogue in art, an ever-varying vogue that comes and goes like the quick-

change artist on the stage; but back of all changes are certain great principles of art which are as universally recognized and as permanent as the established lines of beauty. There are fashions in architecture, as many a "freak house" testifies; but one who builds, like Pisto, in conformity with the essential types of architecture, "builds forever." There are fashions in politics, called "current issues," which are much affected by mere politicians; but there is a statesmanship which goes deeper down and finds eternal issues in the championship of human rights.

There are fashions in religion also; fads and fancies as grotesque as a milliner's wildest dream:—New Thought, Theosophy, Babism, Occultism, with other isms and osophies too numerous to mention. These come and go; but religion stays on. For religion is not form, but substance; not an affectation but a sublime reality; not a superficial dress or canonical livery, which can be donned and doffed at will, but a system of stupendous truths as vital as the functions of an immortal soul.

The religion of the ages.—The forms of religion are matters of little moment as compared with its essential facts; facts which are not subject to the vicissitudes of time. Religion is a force; and forces never change. Fire and water are what they always were. Steam is as old as the rising vapors of the sea. Electricity is not a modern invention, though it ran wild till Franklin lassoed

and others harnessed it. "The old-time religion" is essentially the religion of the ages. It has four great underlying principles.

A personal God.—The first of the great principles is that of a personal God as distinguished from idols. I do not mean such vulgar and obsolete idols as Baal and Dagon and Ashtoreth. These are the old fashions against which the Chosen People were warned long centuries ago. We have other fashions in these days, to wit: gods made of the gray matter of the human brain. "Law," "Force," "the Soul of the Universe," "a Something not ourselves that maketh for righteousness"—these are the latest vogue in idolatry. They are not "graven of wood and stone, by art and man's device," but built of fancy, like castles in the air. They are not only intangible but in the last analysis unthinkable. I could as well bow down before the smoke-wreath that issued from the bottle, in the story of The Fisherman and the Afrite, as worship such a jack-o-lantern of a god.

But religion offers us a God revealed and vouched for by his only-begotten Son. His word is, "When ye pray, say, 'Our Father.'" I know what that means. It appeals to me. I can grasp it. He is a God who can see and hear and pity and help. He can be "touched with a feeling of our infirmities." This is the God whom the soul cries out for.

And he is the only God. "Beside him there is

none other." The Muezzin's call to prayer is a setting forth of the elemental proposition of religion; "Allah il Allah! There is no god but God! Lo, God is great!" And the song of David is the filial response of all humanity:

"As the hart panteth after the water brooks,
So panteth my soul after thee, O God.
My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God:
When shall I come and appear before God?"

A self-respecting man.—The second of the great underlying truths of religion is a self-respecting man. It is the fashion in some quarters to present a very different sort of man. He is the ultimate and consummate product of the calm operation of an interminable series of natural laws. He is the bastard child of Force and Matter, with neither of his parents accounted for. He traces his genealogy backward along a series of bestial ancestors to a primordial germ. This is what Carlyle called "the religion of frog-spawn." I confess I have too much family pride to like this evolved man. How does he please the Daughters of the *Mayflower*? They are fond of tracing their lineage to the Pilgrims who came over in that memorable ship: but why not put the voyage a little farther back and find their birthright in a cargo of anthropoid apes? Is there an affront in the suggestion? If the popular version of Evolution is true there is no alternative. Facts are facts, and when we get aboard of

a theory we should be brave enough to ride to the end of it.

But, fortunately, no one pretends that evolution has been demonstrated. All that Darwin ever affirmed was that it was a likely hypothesis. I, for one, do not propose to believe it until I am obliged to. In the meantime the Bible doctrine of the origin of man is good enough for me. He was made in God's likeness, to stand erect with his face uplifted to the stars, to think God's thoughts after him; an immortal man with divine breath in his nostrils; a man made to live forever and intended to live with God.

"O mighty brother soul of man,
Where'er thou art, or low or high,
Thy skyeey arches with exultant span
O'erroof infinity!"

Sin.—The third of the vital facts of religion is sin. To this fact the response of personal consciousness is as conclusive as that of the revealed Word of God. We have within us the reminiscence of a divine birthright, but also the undeniable sense of a most lamentable fall. There are those, however, who affirm that if there ever was a fall it was "a fall up." They deny the moral quality of sin *in toto*. They regard the sinner as an unfortunate sufferer to be treated with hypodermic injections of compassion. A man who steals is not a thief but a kleptomaniac. A drunkard is a dipsomaniac, to be doctored with nervines and porous

plasters. A man-slayer is an irresponsible victim of "brain storm," and must be handled accordingly. This is sentimental nonsense. There is such a thing as sin; and sin is "any want of conformity unto or transgression of the law of God." Sin involves guilt; and unless some just and rational mode of deliverance is provided, it must logically and inevitably be followed by retribution. Else there is no such thing as justice in this world of ours.

The other word for retribution is hell. The word may be distasteful to ears polite; but there should be no mouthing or mumbling of it. The definition of hell is separation from God. Sin and holiness are so antithetical that "without holiness no man shall see God." The case, then, is a desperate one. But religion and common sense agree that there is no other way of stating it.

Salvation.—The fourth of the great propositions of Religion is salvation. What shall a man do to be delivered from the shame and bondage and penalty of sin? Here enters the gospel with its great doctrine of reconciliation with God. The way has been prepared by the atonement of Christ; and the benefits of that atonement are conditioned only on faith in him. There are other plans or fashions of salvation; but they all break down at the vital point. They do not save. In order to save they must erase the record of the mislived past and so deliver the sinner from the handicap of

unforgiven sin. This, however, they neither do nor propose to do. They are like Darius Green's flying machine which would do anything but fly. In all religions and philosophies of the world there never has been a suggestion of any reasonable mode of deliverance from past sin. This is the distinctive glory of the gospel of Christ. It announces that justice has been satisfied by the ransom of the Cross and that by an appropriating faith we are justified and restored to the favor of God.

"Now I saw in my dream," says Bunyan, "that the pilgrims drew nigh to a miry slough that was in the midst of the plain; and they being heedless did both fall suddenly into the bog. The name of the slough was Despond. Here, therefore, they wallowed for a time, being grievously bedaubed with the dirt; and Christian, because of the burden that was on his back, began to sink in the mire." He struggled, but he could not get out because of his burden. "But I beheld in my dream that a man came to him, whose name was Help; and gave him his hand, and drew him out, and set him on sound ground and bade him go on his way."

This man whose name was Help is he of whom it was written, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for it is he that shall save his people from their sins." The hand which he extends to the despairing soul is scarred with the wounds of his vicarious pain; and the arm which he makes bare for our deliverance is the arm of omnipotent love. "Wherefore

also he is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

Now these are the four great principles of religion. They constitute the sum and substance of it. And the warrant for their truth is found in the Word of God.

I believe in this religion, "the old-time religion." It is the only religion. There are other quasi-religions; but they fail to accomplish the desired end.

Abreast of the past.—I believe in this old-time religion, because it is abreast of the past.

"This is the way the prophets went,
The road that leads from banishment,
The King's highway of holiness."

In a matter of such vital moment the trodden path is the best path for us. Our religion has been tested and approved by centuries of experience. It is beyond all belief that the innumerable company of those who have affixed their faith to the gospel in past centuries, loving it in life and leaning upon it in death, have been victims of a delusion. I am certainly not willing to concede this until stronger reasons are adduced to support it.

Abreast of the present.—I believe in this religion, because it is abreast of the present. There are hundreds of millions of people in the world to-

day who find in this gospel a satisfying response to every possible need. It is their strength in weakness, their comfort in sorrow, their light in darkness, their friend in loneliness, their rod and staff in the Valley of Death.

Abreast of the future.—And I believe in the old-time religion because it is abreast of the future. You will find it in the forefront of every progressive movement of our time. It stands for light and humanity and civilization. It stands for national comity and the brotherhood of man. It is animated by an indestructible spirit of hope and courage; so that, in spite of foes without and betrayals within, it moves right onward to the Golden Age.

I am not ashamed of the gospel; for it has proven itself to be the power of God unto salvation. The fashion of this world passeth away; but the facts of the old-time religion abide. "The Jews ask for signs, and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified; unto Jews a stumbling-block, and unto Gentiles foolishness; but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God."

A Temple of Progress.—This religion was adjusted in the beginning to all the possible mutations of time. Nothing has occurred which its divine Author did not anticipate. Its essential facts have been and always will be in line with progress. When Richelieu was superintending the demolish-

ing of his ancestral château, preparatory to the building of a more magnificent residence, he bade the workmen spare one inner room. It was the chamber where his eyes had first opened to the light, where his mother had lulled him to sleep on her bosom. He could not see it destroyed; but required his architects to conform the plans of his palace to it. So rises the Temple of Progress around the Holy of Holies. In that inner sanctuary is the Ark of the Covenant, within which are deposited the great principles of our faith. The old truths abide! God himself is "the same yesterday and to-day and forever," and all great and enduring verities have their heart and center in him. We shall never, therefore, outlive the old-time religion; certainly not until human nature changes and God ceases to be God.

It is related of Lord Chesterfield that, while visiting in Paris during the flood-tide of infidelity, he was entertained at the table of a distinguished lady known as a bitter foe of the Christian faith. She said to him, "My lord, I am informed that your Parliament is composed of some hundreds of profound and brilliant thinkers. This being so, will you explain to me how it is that, under their authority, the obsolete religion of the Bible is still maintained as the religion of the realm?" He answered, "Madam, it is a mere temporary makeshift. We are casting about for something better; and when that is discovered, we shall surely make way for it."

Above all others.—The world has been casting about, during all the centuries, for something better, and has not found it! Freethinkers have sought for it by the light of the midnight oil; kings and potentates have sought for it by the light of Smithfield fires; but they have not found it. They will go on seeking, in vain. Meanwhile men and women under the burdens of life will come to Christ for succor and deliverance. Sinners in despair will find their only hope beneath his cross. The song of redeeming grace will ring louder and sweeter until it drowns the cry, "Let us break their bonds asunder, and cast away their cords from us." Then every knee shall bow before Christ and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory and honor unto him.

No, there is no reason for being ashamed of the gospel. I have seen many fashions of theology come and go. I have seen many dreams of philosophers vanish into thin air. I have heard many elegies chanted and funeral orations pronounced over the old-time religion; but if there is any significance in the logic of events we can confidently brace ourselves against the Rock of Ages and let the caviling crowd sweep by.

"'Tis the old-time religion,
And it's good enough for me!"

PART II

THE THREE GREAT DOCTRINES

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THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

THE ONE TRUE GOD

The fundamental truth.—Three false roads: Intuition, Reason, the Senses.—The scientific method.—Two true roads: Revelation, the Incarnation.—Teaching of Christ about God: As to his being, his personality, his providence, his moral attributes.—Reconciliation.—The grapple with God.

The fundamental truth.—The fundamental truth of religion is God. As he was in the beginning, so is he the beginning of all.

The man who does not know God has not begun to live. He may eat and drink, make merry, accumulate a fortune or wear a crown; but he has not entered into that better life of high hopes and noble purposes and aspirations which makes us worthy of our divine birthright. For “this is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God.”

To put ourselves into just relations with God is literally a matter of life and death. All theologies are worth mastering, but Theology is indispensable. We must know God.

But where is he? “Oh, that I knew where I might find him! . . . Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot per-

ceive him; on the left hand, when he doth work, but I cannot behold him; he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him!" The horizons recede as we approach them; and the darkness thickens as we grope like blind men feeling their way along the wall.

Three false roads.—There are three roads which are vainly trodden by multitudes who pursue this holy quest. Each of them is marked "This way to God," and each of them is a *cul-de-sac* or blind alley which leaves the soul still groping in the dark.

Intuition.—The first of these roads is intuition. There are no natural atheists. All are born with an indwelling sense of God. We do not enter on conscious life like the inferior orders; but

"Trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God who is our home."

In regions of darkest paganism there are traces of two innate convictions, namely; a divine birth and a sinful alienation. Hence the universal spirit of unrest so pathetically expressed by Augustine, "We came forth from God, and we are restless until we return to him."

No doubt there have been some who, with no light but that which shines along the pathway of intuition, have made his acquaintance; but the vast multitude have simply arrived at idolatry. They

have made unto themselves gods "after the similitude of a man"; gods like the Brocken of the Alps, projected on the skies. An idol is a man-made god. It may be carved out of wood or conjured out of the gray matter of the brain: but all gods are idols, whencesoever they come, except the one true God.

Reason.—The second pathway of the God-seekers is reason. Here we come upon the philosophers and those who travel with them. This also leads to disappointment; as it is written, "The world through its wisdom knew not God."

The golden age of philosophy in Greece followed close on the decay of the Pantheon. It was when the people had lost all confidence in their idols and the cry was heard, "Great Pan is dead!" that the Groves and Gardens and Painted Porches arose on the banks of the Ilyssus. The thoughtful men who assumed the name of *philosophoi*, or "lovers of wisdom," were all seekers after God. The Stoics, Epicureans, Cynics and Peripatetics all hoped to discover him by the light of reason. How vain their quest!

When Simonides was asked for a definition of God, he required some weeks for meditation and then answered, "The more I think of him, the more he is unknown!" The innumerable gods and altars of Athens were finally laughed out of court; but the result was recorded on that other altar which succeeded them, "To the Unknown God."

The stock in trade of the Athenian philosophers was precisely that of the philosophers of our time.

It consisted substantially of four arguments, to wit: *the ontological argument*; to the effect that the being of God is involved in the idea of God. This is good as far as it goes, but it falls vastly short of demonstration; and in any case it reaches no conclusion as to his character. *The cosmological argument*, which reasons from effect to cause and expresses itself in the epigram "Out of nothing nothing comes." This is equally inconclusive, since the necessary Somewhat to which it leads is but the shadow of a god. *The teleological argument*, which proceeds from design to a designer, carrying with it a strong presumption as to infinite wisdom but taking little or no cognizance of the moral nature of God. And *the anthropological argument*, which infers the moral nature of God from the moral nature of man. This goes farther than the others; nevertheless it is so far from being proof in the mathematical sense that one may reasonably question whether any truth-seeker was ever really convinced by it.

These are the arguments which have been used by philosophers from time immemorial; and little has been added in the process of the passing years. The result, as a whole, is melancholy failure. The world by its wisdom, that is by the exercise of its unaided reason, has simply reached Agnosticism; it has not "found out God."

Not to those who deem themselves wise, but rather to the simple whose hearts are open Godward, comes the great revelation. It is one thing

to know about God and quite another to know him. John Hay knew all about President Lincoln from his boyhood up; while little "Tad," who had no such information, knew his father through and through. The eyes of love see farther than the eyes of wisdom. Wherefore Jesus said, "Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein."

Five senses.—The third of the alluring pathways is that of the five senses. This is the method of natural science, which reaches its conclusions on the evidence of the physical senses.

This rules out faith, which is the sixth sense divinely given to men for the apprehension of spiritual things. To undertake to solve any of the great problems which have to do with our spiritual life by the testimony of the finger-tips is to have one's labor for one's pains; since, in the nature of the case, "spiritual things are spiritually discerned." To insist on apprehending a spiritual fact by the physical senses is as preposterous as it would be to insist on seeing with the ears or hearing with the eyes. Faith is not credulity, nor is it unsubstantial, nor is it believing without evidence. On the contrary, it is both substantial and evidential: only it is "the assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen." To refuse to exercise this sixth sense or power of spiritual apprehension is to shut oneself out forever from the possibility of apprehending God or any of the great intangible but real truths which center in him.

The scientific method.—Yet we are constantly hearing, in certain quarters, of the importance of pursuing our theological studies “by the scientific method.” With what result? “We have a world of facts,” they say, “and from these facts, by the inductive process, we must arrive at our conclusions.” It is like an example in Algebra: God is the unknown term; let this be expressed by “x”: the problem then is to resolve “x” into known terms by the use of a multitude of visible and tangible facts. Can it be done? Go on and pursue your researches along the lines of Evolution, until back of cosmos you come to chaos, and back of chaos to the nebula, and back of the nebula to the primordial germ; and that last infinitesimal atom will look up at you with the old question on its lips, as loud as ever and involving a problem as deep as when you began, “Whence came I?” What is your answer? God? Call it “God” if you please; in fact, however, it is simply an impersonal, indefinable, unescapable Something-or-other which, for lack of a better term, is designated as a “First Cause,” but which is infinitely far from what is meant by a personal God.

Two true roads.—Well, then, shall the quest be given up? Is the universal thought of God merely an *ignis fatuus* leading the hopeful traveler into a realm of impenetrable mists and shadows? Or is there still some way of finding God?

Revelation.—Yes, there is a road by which we

approach him; and it is a highway cast up by the King himself. It is called "revelation," or the unveiling of God.

There is an antecedent presumption in its favor; to wit, that if there is a God anywhere in the universe he would not leave us to grope our way hopelessly in the dark toward him, but would somewhere, somehow, make himself known to us.

Well, here is a Book which claims to be such a revelation. It opens with the words, "In the beginning God," and proceeds to set forth the two great doctrines of Creation and Providence. It affirms, on the one hand, that everything in the universe has its origin in the creative power of God; and on the other, that everything is sustained by the providence of God.

In these two doctrines we have the sum and substance of Bible truth. But this is not all. In between the doctrines of Creation and Providence there walks, through all the corridors of Holy Writ, a mysterious Figure who is the foregleam of another revelation farther on. At the outset this Figure appears in the protevangel as the "Seed of the woman," who is to come in the fullness of time to "bruise the serpent's head." And he appears and reappears, now in kingly guise, again as a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and again with a name written on his vesture, "Immanuel," which being interpreted is, God with us.

This Book, claiming to be the written Word of God, makes us acquainted with his being, personal-

ity and moral attributes; but it does not exhaust the theme. It leads us along a road, lighted by visions and prophecies, until it opens into another and clearer road, to wit, "the Incarnate Word of God."

The Incarnation.—And this second road, the Incarnation, is the way which all truth-seekers must pursue if they would finally arrive at a just and saving knowledge of God.

It is here that we meet Christ, bringing his message from the throne. He comes into our world with the express purpose of making God known to us; as it is written, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." He is called the Word, because he is the medium of communication between the Infinite and the finite; as it is written, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God; . . . and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us:" that is to say, the Incarnation is, as it were, the articulation of the speech of God. In the Scriptures we have a letter from God, but in the Incarnation we have the coming down of God to unveil himself before us.

The soul of sinful man is like a child lost among strangers, wild-eyed, lips trembling, eyes searching vainly for a familiar face. Ah, here the mother comes! and the child is soon sobbing out its happiness on her breast. "Cuddle doon, my bairnie!" So it is when the sinner finds Christ, or shall we not rather say, when Christ finds him?

Teaching of Christ about God.—If, then, we are ever to learn theology it must be as disciples, sitting in a docile attitude at the feet of Christ. He, as the incarnate Son, is our authoritative teacher. What, therefore, has he to say about God?

As to his being, he has little or nothing to say; for the obvious reason that God's being is the substratum of his entire doctrine, without which it would be as insignificant as a painted ship upon a painted ocean. Moreover, all his teaching is postulated on the written Word, of which he said, "Search the Scriptures; because ye think in them ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me." And the moment we turn from the Incarnate to the written Word, we come again upon that saying, "In the beginning, God."

As to the divine personality, the teaching of Jesus is indubitably clear. "God is a Spirit," he says, "and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth." It need scarcely be said that a spirit, though invisible and impalpable, is a real self-conscious personality. The communion of Jesus with this Spirit is that of one person with another. He does not speak to Law, nor to Energy, nor to an indefinable "Something not ourselves that maketh for righteousness"; but to One with whom he is on familiar terms. "The only-begotten Son, who is *in the bosom of the Father*, he hath declared him."

As to divine providence he speaks with no uncertain sound. The God whom he unveils is in and over and under all. Out on the hillsides he bids us "consider the lilies, how they grow," and assures us that our Father, "who careth for them, will much more care for us." In pursuance of this fact he encourages us to pray, saying, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." Oh, great Heart of the Infinite, thou art quick to respond to our every cry! The doctrine of prayer, as taught by Jesus, is simplicity itself. We are to run to God with our longings, as children to their parents; for "if ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask him."

As to the moral attributes of God the teaching of Jesus is not only clear but most emphatic; because at this point it touches vitally our eternal welfare. The divine holiness is presented not so much as an attribute as the condition of God's being or the atmosphere in which he dwells. It is the light emanating from his throne of which Christ is the supreme manifestation, as he said, "I am the Light of the world"; and this light must ever be reflected in the life of his disciples, as he said, "Ye are the light of the world; . . . let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven." This holiness is not merely freedom

from moral contamination; but such a sensitive aversion to sin as makes it impossible for God to look with complacency upon any creature who is defiled by it. Hence the appeal to the cultivation of a holy life; the sanctification "without which no man shall see the Lord."

Out of this atmosphere of holiness proceed two attributes which, like opening arms, embrace the world. One of them is Justice, or regard for law. No teacher ever lived, not even Moses, who emphasized as deeply as did Jesus the integrity of the moral law. He defended not only the law itself but the penalties affixed to its violation. The Decalogue is not so severe an arraignment of sin as the Sermon on the Mount, which rings with the inviolability of law.

The other of the outstretched arms is Love. The fullness of divine love is set forth in the words of Jesus, "After this manner therefore pray ye, Our Father." It was wisely observed by Madame de Staël that if Jesus had never done anything in the world except to teach us to say "Our Father" he would have conferred an inestimable boon upon the children of men. God's love is manifest in the unceasing gifts of his providence; but its crowning token is the grace of salvation: "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have eternal life."

Reconciliation.—And the reconciliation between Love and Justice is found at the Cross. Here

“mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other.” As law is sacred and inviolable, its penalty must be inflicted; it must be inflicted either upon the malefactor or upon some competent substitute who shall volunteer to suffer for him. It is the only-begotten Son who volunteers, saying, “Here am I, send me!” The justice of God is shown in the suffering inflicted upon his only-begotten Son; and his love is correspondingly shown in the proffer of all the benefits of that vicarious suffering to every one on the sole condition of faith.

It pleased God to vindicate his supreme majesty before his ancient people in the controversy on Carmel. All day the pagan priests assembled at their altar cried, “O Baal, hear us!” but there was no voice, nor answer, nor any that regarded. At evening the lone prophet of Jehovah stood beside his altar and calmly made his prayer “O Jehovah . . . let it be known this day that thou art God!” Was there any that regarded? Lo, yonder in the twilight sky a falling fleece of fire! In awe-struck silence the people saw it descending until it touched the sacrifice and consumed it. The logic of the argument was irresistible. They cried with one accord, “Jehovah, he is God!”

The antitype and parallel of that great controversy is at Calvary, where Christ, at once the ministering priest and the sacrifice upon the altar, made his last prayer with hands outstretched upon the cross, and the descending fire consumed him as a

whole burnt-offering for the world's sin. The logic, here also, is unanswerable. In all the world there is no other gospel which adequately sets forth the divine love. By the power of truth, by the triumph of righteousness, by the logic of events, by the philosophy of history, by the blood of the atonement, let the world answer, "Our God is the God of Salvation; and there is none other beside him!"

The failure of other religions and philosophies has been grotesquely pathetic. The irony of Elijah on Carmel is merely an echo of the divine burst of laughter out of heaven in response to those who cry, "Let us break their bonds asunder and cast away their cords from us!" "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh!" The Pantheons crumble and the priests die; one altar remains, to wit: the cross on Calvary. It is the sole altar and supreme argument of the true God.

The grapple with God.—But every man must for himself make answer to the argument. Each for himself must fight his way into the truth. It is like the grapple which Jacob had with an unseen antagonist at the brookside. As the night wore on he came to understand that he was at close quarters with God. He wrestled with the Theophany hand to hand and thigh to thigh. He knew that at last Omnipotence had laid hold upon him. Then came a sudden wrench and Jacob fell, disabled. God had thrown him! He sank a helpless man,

but clinging still, he cried, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me!"

Thereupon the blessing was given, a blessing which God had waited through the weary years to bestow upon him. "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob," the Supplanter, "but Israel; for thou hast striven with God. . . . and hast prevailed." Then and there he received the guerdon of knighthood and entered into the higher life. At the close of that conflict the light of morning was glowing on the hills of Edom: how significant the words, "And the sun rose upon him!" The new life had begun; the long quest was over; Jacob had found God. And he went his way limping on his shrunken thigh, to bear through all the after years the token of that struggle until he came to heaven's gate, at peace with God.

It is thus that every man finds God; in a close grapple that ends in self-surrender, an utter yielding to his almighty grace.

So life begins with knowing God. It begins when a man, oppressed by doubt and uncertainty, hears his voice saying, "Reach hither thy hand and put it into my side!" It ends when standing under the Cross he realizes, as Luther did, "He died for me, for me!" Then the day breaks and the shadows flee away. Love conquers doubt; and the soul, beholding the unveiling of the infinite in the passion of Christ, cries out "My Lord and my God!"

THE GOD OF CREATION

In the beginning God created.—Other cosmogonies.—Science in the Genesis record.—A beginning.—God.—Created.—When?—Length of creative epochs.—Order of creative epochs.—Authorship of the account.—The panorama of creation.—The practical outcome.

In the beginning God created.—So begins the divine account of the origin of things.

In some quarters this narrative is called "The Creation Myth," or "The Creation Fable." It is not the scientists, however, but the neophytes and dilettanti of science, who speak on this wise. Your true scientists—such as Newton, Faraday, Dana, Agassiz, Henry, Gray, Dawson, Kelvin and countless others—have been accustomed to refer to the cosmogony of Genesis in reverent terms. Their concept of wisdom has not been so vain-glorious as to prevent their sitting at the feet of God.

It is frequently affirmed that "the Bible is not a scientific book." This is granted, but it is a true book. And whenever it affirms anything with respect to science its statements are scientifically correct, and can be relied on.

Other cosmogonies.—The majesty of the Genesis story is instantly apparent, when contrasted with corresponding records; for of making many cosmogonies there is no end. If there is any appreciable value in mere human wisdom, the Greeks should have been able to speak advisedly in these premises. The starting-point in their cosmogony, as elucidated by Thales, was water. In process of time this water was wrought upon by an all-prevailing energy, as the body is animated by the soul. Out of this operation proceeded in some inscrutable manner the present order of things. But here is no solution of the mystery. The Gordian knot is rudely cut; and we are still left to ask, Whence the final element and the pervading force?

Let us turn to the Egyptians for a contribution to our scientific lore. The starting-point in their cosmogony was a promiscuous pulp, from which the elements separated of their own accord, in some unexplained way. The mass took fire; and the upper portion warmed the lower into life. From beneath crept forth the reptiles, and from the rising smoke the winged creatures of the air. The ooze of the river-bed, like the evolutionists' *bathybius*, furnished the raw material for man.

Or perhaps the scientifically inclined would prefer the cosmogony of the Hindus. They began with darkness. In the darkness was a golden egg. The egg broke and Brahma issued forth. He, turning, made of half the shell the heavens and of the other half the earth. His body then fell asun-

der; and from it proceeded the various castes of men.

Or possibly the Babylonians may help us. They too started with darkness. In the darkness was born a giantess who contributed half of her body to make the heavens and the other half to make the earth; while her blood, mixing with the dust, produced the human race.

Or suppose we turn to the mythology of the Norsemen. The starting-point was a vast chasm, wherein a conflict went on between fire and ice. Out of that conflict was born Ymyr, the giant. His flesh produced the earth, his bones the mountains, his hair the forests, his blood the seas and rivers, his skull the dome of heaven; and from his eyebrows was made a wall around the earth to prevent its inhabitants from falling off.

Such are the cosmogonies of the so-called sacred books of the false religions. How instantly do all thoughtful men, not to say scientists, take issue with their puerilities! Yet these are the results of the best efforts of human wisdom to produce a rational theory of origins. They leave unanswered the great question: Whence came I, and whence came the present order of things?

Science in the Genesis record.—We turn from all such speculations to science; and it is science that speaks in the Genesis record. Here are three stupendous facts, set forth in the three opening words of Scripture: *B'reshith Elohim bara*; that

is, "In the beginning God created." And the three facts thus enunciated are distinctly scientific facts. For science means "to know"; and in the three words referred to we have substantially all that is known, all that has been thus far discovered and all that is likely ever to be found out, respecting the origin of things.

A beginning.—In the first of these words we are advised that there was a beginning.

Let it be observed that there is no beginning in any other cosmogony. There is always something beyond; and that something is inscrutable. To undertake to solve the problem as Plato did, by hypothecating the eternity of matter, is simply an ignominious surrender; it is a begging of the question by the introduction of a guess. Science makes no guesses. If in tracing things back to their beginning it comes up against an insuperable obstacle it stops there, saying, "I know not." But the Genesis record does not stop there. It carries us back beyond man, organic life, cosmos, chaos, matter, nebula, into the primal silence and solitude. And it does not leave us there, in a blank domain of nothingness. It leaves us in the doorway of the King's audience chamber, saying, "Before the mountains were brought forth or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God!"

God.—The second of the great words of Genesis brings us face to face with God, "Source of all being, throned afar." And God, like "the beginning," is distinctly a scientific fact.

In dealing with the creation facts we have choice of three theories. The first of these is the theory of Law.

But Law yields no answer to the problem; for Law itself is an effect and demands a cause. There must be a Lawgiver behind it. In one of the classic poems we have an account of a philosopher who, being shipwrecked on the island of Rhodes, as he walked along the beach found a geometrical figure traced in the sand. "Here," said he, "are *vestigia hominum*," the traces of men. He did not need to be told that some one had been there before him, since the geometrical figure forced the conclusion that somebody had made it.

The second theory is that of Chance. Can the present order of things be accounted for as "a fortuitous concourse of atoms"? Let us see. There are twenty-four letters in the words "In the beginning God created"; suppose we shake them together and cast them out. Now calculate by the law of permutations and combinations how many such castings it would take to produce these same words again. Mathematically the chances are billions on billions against it. What likelihood is there, then, that the infinitude of atoms which constitutes our earth, cast forth to the mercy of fortuitous circumstance, would produce a world of vales and forests and mountains, of birds and beasts and men? The suggestion is grotesquely preposterous.

The last theory, the only one which is left by "the rule of residues," is God. If this does not solve the problem, and solve it scientifically, I do

not know where a thoughtful man can look for any solution of it.

In Westminster Abbey there is a monument to Sir Isaac Newton on which he is represented as weighing the world in a steelyard, with a look of deep perplexity on his face, as if he were asking, "Whence came it?" In the Poets' Corner of the same Abbey there is a monument to Joseph Addison; and the best answer that ever has been given to the question of Sir Isaac Newton, is in Addison's hymn :

The spacious firmament on high,
With all the blue ethereal sky,
And spangled heavens, a shining frame,
Their great Original proclaim.

The unwearied sun, from day to day,
Does his Creator's power display,
And publishes to every land
The work of an Almighty hand.

Soon as the evening shades prevail,
The moon takes up the wondrous tale,
And nightly to the listening earth
Repeats the story of her birth;

While all the stars that round her burn,
And all the planets in their turn,
Confirm the tidings, as they roll,
And spread the truth from pole to pole.

What though in solemn silence all
Move round the dark terrestrial ball;
What though no real voice nor sound
Amid their radiant orbs be found;

In reason's ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious voice,
Forever singing, as they shine,
"The Hand that made us is Divine!"

Created.—The third of the scientific words of Scripture is *Bara*, that is, "created." The word is defined as the making of something out of nothing.

Do you say that is impossible? Do you quote the venerable maxim, "Out of nothing, nothing comes"? But how do we know that? All that we mean is that we never saw something come out of nothing. But in the nature of the case there can be no analogy for it. No man ever made anything; all we can do is to transform one thing into something else. We live on a ball of matter eight thousand miles in diameter; and no scientist has ever yet been able to produce a single grain of sand. Air and earth and water are teeming with life, yet no scientist has ever been able to originate a bioplasmic cell or reanimate a dead fly. It is not strange, therefore, that the creative act is called in question. But let us not undertake to measure God by the analogies of human life. We cannot take his stature with a yardstick or his girth with a tape-measure. Creation is his prerogative. All things are possible with God and "nothing is too hard for him."

We are like schoolboys in the playgrounds at recess, talking in great swelling words about the "infinite," "unconditioned" and "indeterminable."

Suddenly the Master appears upon the scene. What a scampering then! So, when we in our boasted wisdom have uttered our latest word, God comes, saying, "Ye do err, not knowing my power!"

But, assuming the truth contained in the three scientific words of Scripture, there are certain questions which still remain to be answered.

When?—One of these is, "When did the creation occur? How long ago?"

In the margin of the first chapter of Genesis you will find the date 4004 B. C. This is according to Usher's chronology, and it is no part of the inspired text. All that we can gather from the record itself is that the creation occurred "in the beginning"; a beginning which was indefinitely long ago. And that is precisely what science affirms about it.

Length of creative epochs.—The next question is, "How long were the successive periods of creation?"

It is written: "In six days Jehovah made heaven and earth." But objectors say: "All science goes to show that these periods were of indeterminable length." This is true. The chalk cliffs, for example, are a product of animal life, being composed of the shells of marine animalculæ. It is calculated that it would require a century to produce a layer of a single foot; yet there are cliffs on the coast of England a thousand feet deep; and

beneath the chalk are formations of granite whose construction may have required some millions of years. How then could the world have been framed in six solar days?

But who said that the world was "created in six solar days"? Certainly not the Scriptures. Such an assertion is in direct contravention of their statement. The word translated "day" is *yom*; which is used to indicate all sorts of definite and indefinite periods. The proof of that statement is at hand. In Genesis 2 : 4, the word *yom* is made to cover the entire creative week. In Leviticus 25 : 29, it refers to the year of jubilee. In Jeremiah 46 : 21, it includes one of the long campaigns of Pharaoh-Necho. In Psalm 2 : 7, it covers all eternity or the lifetime of God. When it is affirmed that the Scriptures limit the creation to six solar days, the statement is therefore without ground or warrant. The record at this point is absolutely scientific. God works through the immeasurable æons. He makes no haste. The eternal years are his.

Order of creative epochs.—The next question has to do with the order of the creative epochs.

Here again we note a marvelous coincidence. The fossils and footprints discovered in the layers of the primeval rocks are precisely in the Scriptural order. It would not be fair to affirm that no scientists hold a different view; but it is quite within bounds to say that the consensus of science is in favor of the following order: (1) chaos, with

cosmic light; (2) the dividing of the firmaments; (3) the appearing of vegetable life in the palæozoic or carboniferous age; (4) the emergence of the heavenly bodies; (5) the appearance of the lower orders of life in the mesozoic age; (6) the higher orders or mammalia, in the kainozoic age, with man as masterpiece and sovereign of all.

Authorship of the account.—A further question, and a most important one, is “Where did the author of the Genesis record get his information?”

To say that the story is a patchwork of contemporary legends and traditions is only to push the difficulty further back. How could any man speak advisedly as to the order of the creation? If God did create the world, he was alone when he did it. There was no man there to see. Here is his challenge:

“Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?

Declare if thou hast understanding.

Who determined the measures thereof, if thou knowest?

Or who stretched the line upon it?

Whereupon were the foundations thereof fastened?

Or who laid the cornerstone thereof,

When the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?”

Is it not evident, therefore, that the true cosmogony, wherever found, must be by direct revelation from God? The word “revelation” means an un-

veiling. If any man is qualified to write the story of creation it must be because it is divinely unveiled before him.

The panorama of creation.—Is it not reasonable to suppose that the method was that by which the prophets usually received their communications from God? The man divinely chosen to record the story of creation was wrapped in an ecstatic trance, in which he saw a moving panorama of events, broken by intervals of darkness, which would naturally be characterized as night. Let us put ourselves in his place and see what passed before him.

The first vision is of chaos; a molten ball enveloped in igneous vapors. There is a conflict between the internal fires and cooling winds from the illimitable fields of space. The surface of the earth is congealed again and again, only to be ruptured by inward heat and thrown into vast ridges of granite, "like the ice-floes of a polar sea." The rising vapors are condensed in torrents of falling rain, which are thrown back again like water from a white-hot disk. It is a hopeless battle. The fires are worsted and the earth gradually cools. A film forms over the molten sea; the primeval forms of the continents appear. The rains find a lodgment, and rivers race to the lower levels to form the primal seas. All is darkness and turmoil; reverberating artillery of the heavens, with fierce flashes of electric fire; black night and confusion worse confounded. Then light is born; not in an

instant, indeed, for this is cosmic light.¹ A glimmer here and there reveals the unspeakable disorder of the frightful gloom. The scene now shifts. The curtain falls; there is an interval of darkness. The evening and the morning were the first day.

In the second scene the clouds are lifted. The upper and lower firmaments are parted asunder; the outlines of seas and continents are visible; the great canopy is lifted overhead and between it and the earth beneath are sweeping tempests of corrosive gases. Of this period alone it is not written, "And the Lord said, It is very good." As yet the atmosphere can sustain no form of organic life. The world has thus far been only getting ready for it. The curtain falls. The evening and the morning were the second day.

The third vision is of a vast, steaming greenhouse. Out of the sluggish waters springs a luxuriant vegetation. This is the age of bulbous plants, of gigantic sigillaria and lycopodia, of ferns springing aloft, like towering pines, growing rapidly and as rapidly decaying and falling upon one another, until the steaming earth seems like a vast tamarack swamp. This is the carboniferous age. The forces which are to be used in the industries of the future are now being generated and stored away. The eyes of the dreamer close. The evening and the morning were the third day.

¹ It used to be said that light was impossible before the sun, but we know now that the very reverse is true. You cannot rub two sticks together without producing light.

In the fourth vision are seen glimmering points of light in the upper firmament. Thus far there has only been cosmic light. The sun and moon and stars now appear in clear outline. Here is the beginning of divisions of time. The pendulum swings. There are preparations for the succession of summer and winter, seedtime and harvest. The world is getting ready for history. Again the scene shifts. The evening and morning were the fourth day.

The fifth vision brings in the lower orders of animal life. The egg-bearers appear, reptiles and fishes and birds. A visit to the Museum of Natural History will throw light on this period. Here are lizards fifty feet long crawling in the slime. Here are creatures with eye-sockets a foot in diameter. Here are birds that leave mighty footprints on the soft formative rocks. The curtain falls again. The evening and the morning were the fifth day.

The sixth vision shows the mammals or higher forms of life. The earth is teeming with them; beasts of the field and forest. And on this canvas last of all, supreme and pre-eminent, appears man, having dominion over all living things, erect and sovereign, with his face uplifted toward heaven, "able to think God's thoughts after him." So ends the Panorama of Creation. The evening and the morning were the sixth day.

And then God entered into his rest; as it is written, "In six days Jehovah made heaven and

earth . . . and rested the seventh day; wherefore Jehovah blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it."

How imposing is this record as compared with other cosmogonies. What simplicity! What fine reasonableness! What a scientific tone of absolute certainty! And if this be not scientific, how shall we account for the fact that Moses or somebody else was able thus to anticipate the approved results of modern science? And this so many thousands of years ago!

It is pleasant in this connection to recall the testimony given by one of the most eminent scientists of our time, Professor Dana of Yale University. In his farewell interview with the Class of '67, of which I was a member, he said: "Young men, let me say in parting with you, after our pleasant association in scientific study in this classroom, that in my judgment, when you are puzzled and bewildered amid the conflicting views of men who claim to present scientific truth in the form of hypotheses, you can never go far astray if you will receive as your scientific ultimate the teaching of the Word of God."

The practical outcome.—But what is the practical bearing of all that has been said? Much every way. If the story of creation is true it furnishes an antecedent probability that the Bible is true and trustworthy in every respect. On the other hand, if the veracity of the author of Genesis is success-

fully impugned, what reason have we for assuming the truth or trustworthiness of other portions of Scripture wherein we are advised with respect to spiritual things?

The first chapter of Genesis and the first chapter of John go hand in hand. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. . . . All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that hath been made. . . . And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us."

I see two thrones: one is on the Circle of the Universe, whereon God sits, high and lifted up, with veiled face, calling into being things that are out of those that were not. The other is on Calvary; and here His face is unveiled. The God of creation is the God of salvation. "The God that rolls the world along speaks all the promises." The problem of origins is the problem of destiny.

" 'Twas great to call a world from naught,
"Tis greater to redeem."

I hear two fiats: one is, "Let there be light!" and cosmos emerges from chaos in the glory of the sun. The other is recorded in the saying, "The light shineth in the darkness," and further in the words, "Seeing it is God, that said, Light shall shine out of darkness, who shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

It is related of Dr. Simeon of Cambridge that when he was dying he said, "I am not afraid; I find my comfort in the saying that is written, In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth; for He who created is able to save. The God who framed the world can uphold and will never forsake me."

THE GOD OF PROVIDENCE

A definite plan.—Universal activity.—Universal harmony.—Universal benevolence.—Three kinds of Providence.—A distinction.—All things: Prosperity, adversity, doubt, temptation, sorrow, sin.—Through Christ.

A definite plan.—Let us be glad that we are not living in a topsy-turvy world. I wouldn't like to live in a home where every child was left to his own sweet will. Would you? I wouldn't like to live in a country where there was no government or executive but where every citizen was a law unto himself. Would you? I wouldn't like to ride on the Empire State Express at the rate of sixty miles an hour unless I knew we were going on a good roadbed, with an engineer in the cab. Would you? But we are living in a world that revolves on its axis at the rate of a thousand miles an hour and also around its orbit at the rate of a thousand miles a minute; yet somehow we keep our equilibrium! Let us rejoice in the fact that God is on his throne and rules the world according to a definite plan.

Paul knew that there was such an overruling plan when he wrote: "To them that love God all things work together for good." When a man can say like Paul, "I believe that there is a well ordered

plan in mundane affairs and a God behind it," he is on the way toward a comprehensive philosophy of life.

This plan is called Providence. It is a great word, full of mysteries. But what of that? There isn't a petty government on earth that has not its state secrets. Why should God reveal everything to us? In Paul's words we have a clear setting forth of all that really concerns us. It is a compendium of all necessary information as to the divine method of managing this world of ours.

Universal activity.—The first fact here set forth is universal activity. "All things are at work." There is no such thing as inertia. The science of nature is not statics but kinematics. The stars wheel around their courses, and even the atoms in a block of granite are in state of perpetual flux.

Universal harmony.—The second fact is universal harmony. All things "work together." This means that they are under a common law. Order is the result of co-ordination. Nothing is independent of anything else. In the depths of the ocean there are coral insects at work making continents; in the course of time those continents will be occupied by busy men. It thus appears that men and animalculæ are in a sort of partnership; and Wall Street becomes a corollary of the bottom of the sea. The "music of the spheres" is real music. Scientists say there is a point in the upper

atmosphere where all sounds are harmonized; where the roll of thunder, the rattle of artillery, the laughter of children, the groans of the dying, the murmur of brooks and the noise of traffic are all combined, as it were, into a sublime oratorio. We cannot hear it, but God does.

Universal benevolence.—The third fact of Providence is universal benevolence. All things are working together “for good.” The plan of Providence is benevolent because its Executive is well disposed toward all. “God is love.”

Three kinds of Providence.—The early fathers were accustomed to speak of three kinds of Providence, namely: General, Special and Particular. The analysis was a good one: and it will answer our present purpose to follow it.

By General Providence is meant the divine care of all things in the province of nature. By reason of his three infinite attributes, omnipresence, omniscience and omnipotence, God is able to look after infinites and infinitesimals alike. He builds the mountains and the molehills. He controls the falling star and the falling snowflake. He cultivates with equal care the lofty pine and the violet that hides beneath it. “Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feedeth them.”

By Special Providence is meant the divine care

of men. It is natural that man, who is God's masterpiece, should be regarded with a favor beyond that extended to inanimate things. And this favor is toward all sorts and conditions of men. God loves all. The proof of this is his constant care for all. "He sendeth rain on the just and the unjust." The wicked, as well as the righteous, can say, "There's a Divinity that shapes our ends, rough hew them how we may." And a still more striking proof of this generic love is afforded in his unspeakable gift; it is written, that Christ "should taste of death for every man."

By Particular Providence is meant the singular regard of God for those who love him.

A distinction.—So far, doubtless, we have all been agreed; but now perhaps we shall part company; for at this point a distinction is made in the philosophy of Providence between good and bad men. It is written: "*To them that love God all things work together for good.*"

Why should not such a discrimination be made? Why should not God manifest a singular love toward those who are in filial relation with him? They belong to his family, being received into it "by the spirit of adoption," whereby they cry, "Abba, Father!" Is it not natural that a father, however kindly he may be disposed toward all his friends and neighbors, should view the members of his own household in a different way? God says distinctly, "I love them that love me." Jesus said

to the disciples, "He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father; and I will love him and will manifest myself unto him." And when Jude asked, "What is come to pass that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us and not unto the world?" the answer was. "If a man love me he will keep my word; and my Father will love him; and we will come unto him and make our abode with him."

The ground of this discrimination lies not in God but in men. He does the best he can for all; but in the case of the ungodly his "best" is not their "good," because they will not have it so. In the tragedy of Faust the roses that were dropped from heaven upon the undeserving were changed into burning coals before they reached them. So do the blessings of God come down upon the ungodly. They have sovereign wills of their own and can do as they please with his goodness. They can thwart all his beneficent purposes in their behalf, if they so choose, making even his long-suffering patience an occasion for continuance in sin.

If a bad man and a good man have adjacent farms, the rain will fall alike upon them, but with different results. The bad man will gather his crops to his own advantage, without a thought of saying, "God, I thank thee!" But the good man will make a prayer as he scatters the grain and offer thanksgiving as he reaps it; and, when his garners are full, he will show himself a grateful debtor for what the Lord has given him.

The two thieves who were crucified on either side of Jesus were alike the beneficiaries of a kind providence. God had cared for them both, keeping them alive and feeding them at his bountiful table; and the Saviour between them tasted death for both. Yet one reviled him and went to his own place; while the other repented, believed and went to Paradise with him.

So it comes to pass that things work differently for different men. God does his best; but his best may be perverted into evil by those disposed to evil. For the righteous, on the other hand, his best means their real and eternal good. And this because they have come into harmony with his benevolent plan, and have manifested their consent by accepting Christ as the unspeakable gift of his grace. For this reason it is obvious that they have a singular claim upon him.

A moment's thought must convince us that such a discrimination as has been indicated is not only natural, in the necessity of the case, but a wise provision for the welfare of the race. If God's friends and enemies were treated alike by him, there would be no moral government in the world at all. This fact is recognized in every community; and the welfare of society depends upon it.

All things.—Are we to understand then that, literally, all things work together for good to them that love God? Yes; literally all.

Prosperity.—It is easy to see how their prosper-

ity works for their good. If a godless man is prospered in worldly things does his wealth make him a better man? Not if we can trust our observation. Dives cuts off his coupons, reaches out for more, congratulates himself on his clever cupidity, and grows farther and farther away from God. But one who truly loves God realizes that his wealth is a divine trust and lives accordingly, regarding himself as a steward of God. His riches, by affording him an increased opportunity of doing good, make him a better man.

Adversity.—But, when adversity comes, what then? All alike must partake of it. Children who have no diet but sweetmeats are certain to be weaklings. God knows how to administer plain food and medicine, also, on occasion. When the ungodly find their plans overturned, their wealth scattered and the bitter draught put to their lips, they make a wry face and, if they recognize God at all, they cry out against him. The righteous, on the contrary, reason on this wise: "We had the fathers of our flesh to chasten us, and we gave them reverence; shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits and live?" And with a submissive mind they add, "Our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory." It is not in a spirit of stoical acceptance of the inevitable, but with the docility of filial love, that they say, "It is the Lord; he doeth all things well."

Doubt.—And doubt; does that also work for their good? For, be it observed, doubt is not confined to the ungodly. There are occasions when the best of people experience it. But there are two kinds of doubt, as there are two twilights, one of the evening and another of the morning. A godless man by fondling his doubts cultivates them and so makes unbelief a foregone conclusion. But when doubt assails a true Christian he agonizes to be rid of it; he carries it to the mercy-seat and lays it before him who said, "I am the truth"; he invokes the help of the Holy Spirit who opens the eyes of the blind to things as they are. Thus his faith grows brighter and brighter unto the perfect day.

Temptation.—But as to temptation; does that also work "for good" "to them that love God"? It does; else it would never have been written, "Count it all joy . . . when ye fall into manifold temptations." When a wicked man is tempted to evil he is inclined to lay it to heredity or environment, and, having no helper, he fights alone and against overwhelming odds to overcome it. A righteous man, on the other hand, knows that he is tempted of his own lust and enticed, and straightway, invoking the help of God, he grapples with it. This means, sometimes, resisting unto blood; but "blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he hath been approved he shall receive the crown of life." He who wins out in this, the noblest fight that is possible to mortal man, drinks up the strength of

the vanquished, gains strength of character accordingly, and proceeds to thank God for it.

Sorrow.—And when sorrow comes to the godly, what then? The man who is without faith in the gospel which brings life and immortality to light, when his home is broken up and loved ones are carried to God's acre, must needs bid them "Good-by!" It is a long leave-taking. But for the godly man there is no such farewell. His leave-taking is only *Auf wiedersehen*; "Until we meet again." As the golden bands of earth are broken one by one, new bands are binding him closer to the skies. There are hands beckoning and voices calling to the great reunion in the Father's house. There is pain in the parting; but what a greeting there will be one of these bright days! Wherefore "blest be the sorrow, kind the storm, that drives us nearer home."

Death.—And how about death? To the ungodly death is the King of Terrors. It ends all, or else it opens a fearful door into the Unknown. But to God's children death is only "a covered bridge, leading from light to light, through a brief darkness." To them death is the fairest of heaven's angels coming to call them out of life's pilgrimage into an eternal rest: out of the sordid tasks of this lower world into nobler pursuits; out of dreams and wondering into clear visions, face to face and eye to eye. Death is not the end of life but its beginning. It merely closes an apprenticeship which fits us for life farther on.

Sin.—The only thing that remains to complete this category of “all things” is sin, which is worse than adversity, worse than death, worse than all. Sin is the only thing in God’s universe of which it can be said, “There is no good in it.” How, then, can sin work together with all other things for the good of those who love God? By the simple fact that he overrules it. The sin of the impenitent means death, because they refuse to enter the door of pardon; and “without holiness no man shall see God.” But when the righteous is enticed into sin he makes humble confession; and God, according to his promise, is faithful and just to forgive him.

And every experience of pardon gives him a new vision of grace. Oh, blessed be God for this manifestation of his power in overruling sin and making it pay tribute to those who love him! Herein is the answer of Samson’s riddle, “Out of the eater came forth food, and out of the strong came forth sweetness.”

He who, with God’s help, puts up a brave fight against his besetting sins shall come to heaven’s gate “more than conqueror,” dragging those sins as captives at his chariot wheels; and his experience will have taught him a song which angels and arch-angels cannot sing. He will stand with the great multitude who are “arrayed in white robes, and palms in their hands,” who have “washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb,” and will cry: “Blessing and glory and

wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be unto our God forever and ever!"

So it appears that literally all things are working together for our good if we truly love God. As it takes all the colors of the rainbow to make the white solar ray, so it requires all the experiences of human life, under the ruling and overruling of divine providence, to make a man worthy to stand at last in the presence of a righteous God.

It is not always easy for us who are in the midst of the confused sounds of this lower life, learning our lessons impatiently, like children in the buzz of a busy schoolroom, to realize how this can be.

I once visited a linen mill in Belfast where the proprietor said, "I would like to show you the whole process of manufacture; so let us begin at the bottom and work up." We entered the basement first, where there were piles of flax in bales and bundles and tangled masses, from Egypt, Australia, New Zealand and all over the world. There was no beauty there; but as we went from one floor to another we came at last to the upper floor where the most complicated machinery was weaving the flax into linen finer than Egyptian byssus, in patterns of exquisite beauty.

It is scarcely to be expected that while we are living down here, amid the raw stuffs that enter into the final glory of the spiritual life, we should be able to see the patterns of character which the Lord is weaving for us; but one day, going "from the bottom to the top," it will surely appear that

he was doing his best to develop the best possible for us.

Through Christ.—It is a great thing to be included in this “particular providence”; and the door is open for all the children of men. But there is one door only; that is Christ, who said, “I am the door,” and, “No man cometh unto the Father but by me.” All the blessings that we have been considering are for those who love God; but how can any man say, “I love God,” while he rejects God’s only-begotten and well-beloved Son?

The thought that all things are thus working together had an overwhelming significance to Paul when he uttered it; for observe the triumphal note in the words which immediately follow:

“What shall we then say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?—He that spared not his own Son but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things?—Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ Jesus that died; yea rather, that was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Even as it is written,

For thy sake we are killed all the day long;
We were accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord!"

THE DOCTRINE OF MAN

THE FIRST MAN

The climax of creation.—Adam was the first man.—
He was unique.—He was the progenitor of all
mankind.—He was created in the likeness of God.
—He was an innocent man.—His fall.—The re-
sult.—The Redeemer.—The universal question.

In all literature there is nothing more impressive than the story of creation. God is represented as sitting upon the circle of the universe and calling into being things that were not. In the midst of universal confusion he speaks; and chaos comes to order! He calls the roll of heavenly bodies; and sun, moon and stars come trooping into line! At his fiat the earth is carpeted with verdure, and air and ocean teem with living things. "And God saw that it was good."

At this point we come upon an impressive pause. The temple was reared; but there was no priest or worshiper. All nature was vocal; but there was no voice of thanksgiving. There was "the music of the spheres"; but it was a song without words. The murmuring winds and rippling brooks could not articulate the praise of Him who created them.

The climax of creation.—It is a stupendous figure of speech that calls us, at this juncture, into a

council of the ineffable Trinity, in which the three persons of the Godhead are saying, "Let us make man!" So came the masterpiece of creation into being—man, erect, with his eyes toward heaven, and room in his brain for all the mighty plans and enterprises of life and history! man the thinker, man the weeper and merrymaker, man the worshiper, man the master of seas and continents, man the homemaker, the architect of thrones and dynasties, man with a heart and conscience; and, above all, with a purpose, namely: to glorify God.

All things were ready for him: the land for his home, and the sea for his commerce; the clouds were waiting to water his fields, and all the forces of nature to be harnessed at his will. The springs of water and inexhaustible mines in the bosom of the hills were waiting to gladden and enrich him. The cattle were waiting to bear his burdens and the birds to sing for him. It was a good world, a wonderful world. It was a temple indeed, but without a service. It had no ministering priest nor worshiping congregation. But behold, the tenant comes, "a living soul," divinely animated, with a heart for gratitude and a voice to praise God.

The man who thus appeared was called "Adam." And no man of the Scriptures has been more neglected than he. I have heard a good many sermons in my time, but never a sermon about Adam. Can it be that for some reason we cherish a grudge against him? If so, what has he done to offend us?

Adam was the first man.—And just here science and revelation are at one. There have been dreams and guesses and hypotheses about a “prehistoric man”; but science, which is derived from a word meaning “to know,” has to do not with conjectures but with facts. The trouble with all the much-heralded prehistoric men is that, before their exploitation is well under way, they lose their credentials.

We used to hear much of the “pliocene skull”; but what has become of it? A few years ago the fossil remains of a man were found in the Delta of the Mississippi, at such a depth below the surface that it was announced forthwith that their original must have lived—by an exact calculation based upon the deposits of earth—some millions of years before Adam. But unfortunately the excavators kept on digging and presently, farther down, they unearthed the remains of a flat-boat. So passed away the glory of that prehistoric man. And thus it ever is. “The mountains travail and bring forth a mouse.” We speak within bounds, therefore, when we say that the researches of exact science are in confirmation of the biblical narrative, to the effect that Adam was the first man.

Was unique.—He was not begotten or born as we are; nor, so far as the inspired record goes, was he evolved from any of the lower orders of life. He was “created.” At the divine fiat he stood straightway on his feet, a fully developed man.

At this point again science and revelation are at one. The "so-called science," which deals in hypotheses, may dissent; but the science which grounds its propositions on authenticated facts is in hearty accord with the statement that the first man was as well developed as the man last born into this world of ours.

It is written that God formed him out of the dust. The legend of Prometheus affirms that he was formed out of clay and animated by fire; but science and revelation agree that the human body, as to its constituent parts, is identical with the composite dust, the flying dust, the débris and sweepings of animal and vegetable life. "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." The scientist analyzes the body and finds it composed of oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen, carbon, phosphorus, lime, iron, sulphur and a pinch of salt. You can put them in a line of bottles on a shelf. You have here the elements of inorganic matter, involving the possibilities of both life and death. Is this all? Take down those bottles from the shelf and reorganize their contents into a human form. Have you then a man? By no means. What is lacking? The very thing that is here supplied: "And God . . . breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul." There is light in his eyes; there is energy in his frame; there is passion in his heart. This is a man!

In the soul which thus animates his body we find the rationale of his sovereignty over all the

lower orders of life: as it is written, "Let him have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens, . . . and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."

Here also is the guarantee of his immortality. The life of Adam is the breath of God. Who or what shall make an end of it? The breath may leave the body, as when a tenant quits his domicile; but to say that either the soul or the tenant has, therefore, been annihilated is to speak beyond the bounds of reason. When men have exhausted all their logic in the futile attempt to prove immortality by what is called "the scientific method," we return to the simple terms of the creative record and pronounce it incredible that any save God himself can make an end of the majestic being who is thus animated by the breath of God.

He was the progenitor of all mankind.—The multitudinous peoples of the earth are all descended from him.

And here again science and revelation combine to affirm the unity and solidarity of the race. The word which was spoken by Paul on Mars' Hill, God "made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth," is a comprehensive summary of the first and last authoritative statement respecting the origin of man.

As all have a common origin, it follows that all are equal before God. There are diversities of a thousand sorts, in race and color, in wealth and

culture, in language and custom; but all are of the same lineage. The preamble of our Declaration of Independence, "All men are born free and equal," is the corollary of Paul's manifesto on Mars' Hill. You may trace your birthright to the Pilgrims or the Huguenots or the Dutch forefathers; but the roots of your family tree are deeper down and farther back: as the record runs, "He was the son of Seth, who was the son of Adam, who was the son of God."

He was created in the likeness of God.—Where did that likeness between God and Adam reside? It was certainly not physical; since God has "neither body, parts, nor passions." It must have been in his soul, therefore. But what do we mean by "soul"? It is a trinity, made up of mind, conscience and will; and in this co-operating three-in-one we find the divineness of man.

The mind belongs distinctly and exclusively to him. A fox can do a sort of thinking; it can estimate the width of a brook and calculate its own power to leap it. We are led to conclude that instinct and reason overlap, in a way. But the human mind is singular in that it can, as Kepler said, "think God's thoughts after him." It can contemplate the great verities and wrestle with the great problems of the spiritual life. It can look backward into the past and forward into the future. It can recognize its relationship with the God who created it by saying reverently, "I thank thee."

The conscience is also distinctly and exclusively ours. We have no reason for supposing that any of the lower orders of life can differentiate between right and wrong. Plato spoke of the inward power by which we are enabled to "discern betwixt the worse and better reason." And just there is the seat of moral responsibility. The finger which conscience lifts to warn or admonish us is pointed straight at the judgment throne.

And the power of volition is ours exclusively. We are each endowed with a sovereign will; and so far as we know there is no other creature in the universe that has it. The stars in their courses move precisely in the orbits marked out for them. Birds of the air and beasts of the field obey the laws of their nature which are the behest of God. The ebb and flow of the tides are under the beck and call of One who says, "Thus far and no farther." There is no demur or refusal anywhere. Man only has the power to disobey the divine will; so that when his Lord says, "Thou shalt," he can answer, "I will not!" It is conceivable that God could have made a masterpiece without this power of choice; but, in that event, it would have been an automaton, and not a man. And whatever we may think of the beauty of such a masterpiece—of such a machine, wound up to go and helpless till wound up again—we will agree that it would have borne no likeness to a sovereign God.

He was an innocent man.—That is to say, he was absolutely free from sin.

But this is only to say that he was a characterless man. For innocence is negative, while character is the most positive thing in the world. An innocent man has no more character than a white marble statue. But while Adam, as created, was only negatively pure, he was endowed with a capacity for positive virtue. His destiny was in equipoise. He must be subjected to trial before he could realize the possibilities that were in him. A true man is always a self-made man. In other words, character is the outcome of a grapple which involves the exercise of the sovereign will.

So it came to pass, of necessity, that Adam was exposed to trial. "And Jehovah God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shall not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." As yet Adam had no experimental knowledge of good and evil. He could only know evil by disobeying the divine law. "The tree in the midst of the garden" would answer as well as anything for the crucial test. What happened then? "He did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked."

His fall.—The moment he ate of that forbidden tree he was stripped of his innocency and knew it. That moment he was initiated into the experience of evil. That moment his wisdom teeth were cut, to his sorrow. That moment he "died in trespasses

and sin." He had been made "a living soul," and the life of his soul was communion with God. He had been warned that disobedience meant death. And hearing the voice of God, walking in the garden, he hid himself. "And Jehovah God called unto the man and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid!" The soul that parts company with God is dead, so far as its higher functions are concerned, because it is always hiding from him.

And when Adam fell he dragged his posterity with him. A statement like that would formerly have been challenged; but since the doctrine of "original sin" has been scientifically rechristened under the title "heredity," there is little or no opposition to it. We may not like the terms in which the New England Primer phrased it, "In Adam's fall we sinnèd all"; or in which John Milton sang

"Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world and all our woe";

but let the fact be stated in scientific terms—as when you attribute your sciatica to a remote ancestor who violated the laws of health—and you instantly assent to it. We may take exception to the justice of the proposition, but the fact is indisputable. And we are no more warranted in questioning its justice than we would be in refusing to pay our taxes for the extinction of our national debt because we had no hand in contracting it.

The result.—The race has lost its primal innocence. "For there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." We have lost, in like measure, our self-respect; since we acknowledge our transgressions; and our sins are ever before us. We have lost the life of fellowship with God, and we have acquired a universal tendency to sin. Otherwise how is it that sin is so easy and goodness so difficult for us? A pagan wrote, "The downward path is easy; but to recover one's steps and regain the upper air, ah, there is the struggle of life!" And a fierce struggle it is! For, as Plato said, "We ride in a chariot drawn by two horses pulling in different ways"; or as Paul puts it, there is a war in our members; so that when we would do good, evil is present with us.

This is, indeed, the grapple of life; and we are hopelessly handicapped in it. We are not only handicapped by our inheritance of evil tendency; but by the cumulative force of habit, which we draw after us as "an ever-lengthening chain"; and also by the horror of the mislived past, which cripples our ambition by shutting us up to "a certain fearful looking for of judgment." How can a man hope to win out in a struggle against such odds?

The practical question is, What shall we do? It is obvious that we are without hope except in the intervention of the omnipotent God who created us. We are "lost." Lost is the word. We are

lost to innocence, lost to character, lost to usefulness and happiness, lost in a far-wandering exile from God. But so long as God is omnipotent we are not hopelessly lost. We are lost as a wreck that may yet be dragged from the shoals. We are lost, like the prodigal in the far country, who may yet be found. We are lost beyond all self-salvation, but not beyond the saving grace of the all-wise and Almighty God.

The Redeemer.—At this juncture we come upon another council in the Trinity. "God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek after God . . . There is none that doeth good, no, not one." He saw the race going on recklessly and hopelessly in sin. He heard the cry of the perishing, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Then the council. In all the pages of Scripture there is no bolder imagery than this. The Father and Son and Spirit are represented as asking, "Whom shall we send; and who will go for us?" that is, "Who shall undo the awful thing that Adam did? Who shall repair the wreck? Who shall go forth as a knight-errant to restore humanity to truth and righteousness?" And the only-begotten Son of the Father volunteers to go, saying, "Here am I!" He saw us plunged in deep distress, and flew to our relief.

No sooner had Adam sinned than the second Adam was prophesied in the protevangel that the

Seed of woman should bruise the serpent's head. In the fullness of time he came to atone for our sins, and to open unto us, in his gospel, the way of everlasting life. And on the cross he did it!

The universal question.—The question that now demands an answer from every man is this, *Shall I continue in the estate wherein Adam left me* or shall I, by faith, receive Christ as my Saviour from sin? The first Adam was our natural progenitor; the second Adam offers himself as the "firstborn among many brethren," by whose triumph over death we may enter into life. The first man Adam was made a living soul, and he died; the second Adam was made a quickening spirit, with power to confer life upon all who believe in him. He called himself "the resurrection and the life." He said, "I come that they may have life and may have it abundantly." The first Adam or the second Adam? Sin or character? Death or life? It is for every man to say for himself which it shall be.

THE MEASURE OF A MAN

Measuring man.—Measuring God.—Measuring by the soul.—By speech.—By deeds.—Non-Christians.—Falling short.—The true measure.

I do not know you; and you do not know me. We are like unacquainted neighbors looking at each other through windows on opposite sides of the street. Nay, worse than that, we do not even see each other; we only see the respective houses that we live in. The tenant who is looking through these eyes and speaking with these lips is quite beyond your ken. How, then, shall you find him out?

Measuring man.—How to measure a man; that is the question. It cannot be done with a foot-rule; because stature has little or nothing to do with it. If you use steelyards you will find so many pounds of bone and sinew and blood and adipose; but that is obviously not the substance of a man. Or suppose you analyze him chemically and put his component parts into bottles on a shelf; so much carbon in one, so much phosphorus in another and so on; will that row of bottles hold your man?

Well, then, let us measure him by his wealth. If you turn a boy's pocket inside out you will find a ball of string, a cork set with fish hooks, a Bar-

low knife, *et cetera*; and when he grows up into a millionaire his pockets will hold only larger playthings, such as bonds, mortgages and yellow dust; millions it may be; but millions cannot make a man.

We turn then to his genealogy. If you find an idler asleep under an oak, can you measure him by the oak? No more can you measure your man by his family tree. Well, there is nothing left but his crowns and his purple and tinsel gewgaws.

“Ye see yon birkie ca’d a lord,
Wha’ struts an’ stares an’ a’ that?
Though hundreds worship at his word
He’s but a cuif for a’ that. . . .
The rank is but the guinea’s stamp;
The man’s the gowd for a’ that.”

These methods will not answer. In order to form a just estimate of man we must somehow get at himself and not merely at the outer shell of circumstance that envelops him. The true mode of measurement is given by Solomon: “As a man thinketh in his heart so is he.” The same idea is expressed by Isaac Watts, where he says,

“Were I so tall to reach the pole
Or grasp the ocean in my span,
I must be measured by my soul:
The mind’s the standard of the man.”

Measuring God.—This is the way we measure God. “No man hath seen him at any time,” but his thoughts are all about us. “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my

ways," saith Jehovah, "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." David sings, "How great are thy works, O Jehovah! Thy thoughts are very deep." "How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God!" In like manner Paul pays tribute to the thoughts of the infinite mind, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past tracing out!" The stars of heaven, the rolling seas and the mountains are among his great thoughts. But oh, the riches of the infinite mind as revealed in his loving thoughts! His Word written for our guidance; his Word incarnated for our salvation; the Cross and the redeeming work that was wrought upon it—these are among his loving thoughts. Put all those thoughts together and you will have a just conception of God, who is otherwise past finding out.

Measuring by the soul.—As we are God's children we must needs be measured in the same way. To know a man you must do more than pass your hands over his face. You must get down into "the hidden man of the heart" and rummage among his thoughts; so shall you measure him, for "so is he."

"We live in deeds, not years; in thoughts, not breaths;
 In feelings, not in figures on a dial:
 We should count time by heart-throbs; he most lives
 Who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best."

Let it be understood, however, that the thoughts which thus define and reveal a man are not the dreams and reveries which merely skim his surface like zephyrs on a summer sea, but "the thoughts of his heart." The word "heart" is here used in its most comprehensive sense; it refers not merely to the emotional functions, but to the brain and conscience and will. The whole man is doing this thinking; and the result is a code or series of deep convictions and principles which, on the one hand, define character and, on the other, furnish a working theory of life.

The thinking of a man's heart is not like surface plowing for the raising of meadow grass, but the driving of a plowshare deep into the reality of things for a harvest of wheat. When the process is over the man does not say, "I guess," but, "I know; I believe; I am persuaded thus and so." His thoughts have become principles by being sealed with a Yea and Amen; and these constitute the man. If we were thoroughly familiar with these thoughts we should know the man. In order to do that, however, we must be in constant company with him. In that case we should perceive his thoughts in two different ways.

By speech.—To begin with, they express themselves in words; as it is written "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."

It is not, however, by what a man says at any particular time that he uncovers himself. A mer-

chant's stock-in-trade must not be judged by the display in his show window. You repeat the Apostles' Creed: "*I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord. . . . I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting; Amen.*" That sounds orthodox; but are you sure you mean it?

The betrayal of the inner man is not by any single utterance but by one's entire vocabulary. If I could follow you about and listen at your home, in the market-place and wherever you have dealings with your fellow-men; if I could hear what you are saying to yourself when your lips move as you pass along the street, I might thus be able to make a diagnosis of your character; for in the long run the tongue gives the heart away. It was with this in mind that the Apostle James said, "If any man thinketh himself to be religious, while he bridleth not his tongue but deceiveth his heart, this man's religion is vain."

By deeds.—The thoughts of the heart are also revealed by the deeds of a man. It is a true saying, "Actions speak louder than words."

But here again we are not to pass judgment on character by any particular act. A while ago a millionaire with a stroke of his pen endowed a college, and thereby set forces in motion which are destined

to do good along the ages. Will you say, therefore, that he was thoroughly a good man? On the same day a husband, crazed by a "brain-storm" of jealousy, slew his familiar friend; for which he was sentenced to spend the remainder of his life behind prison bars. Will you say, therefore, that he was thoroughly a bad man? In either case your judgment would be superficial and wholly at fault. In order to determine with respect to the character of either of those or of any other man, you must get the sum total of his acts. You must follow him into the company of his wife and children, of his intimate friends and business associates, into all the relations of his life. Would you undertake to sell a house by furnishing a single brick as a sample of it? Look at your man. Follow him. Get his *tout ensemble*. Test him by the Decalogue. Then test him by the Sermon on the Mount, then by the Lord's Prayer. And before you are through with it, if you can only keep in his company long enough, you will find that "the hidden man of the heart" has come out into the open.

It is unfortunate that we are never long enough with any one to pass a clear judgment upon his character from the sum total of either his words or his deeds. But God is; he sees him and hears him every moment of the day and the night; and, therefore, he "knoweth him altogether." He makes no mistakes in judgment, because he is "acquainted with the secret imaginations of the heart of a man."

The thoughts of a man as thus reflected in speech and conduct make up his character. "So is he."

"Worth makes the man, and want of it the fellow;
The rest is naught but leather and prunella."

The prevailing fault of our time is the estimating of manhood by the accidentals of life rather than by its essentials. Not what a man has or what happens to him; not wealth nor noble blood nor crowns nor titles; but the things that are in him and shining through him; his thoughts, motives, springs of action; these constitute the man.

Non-Christians.—The non-Christian claims that he does not come under the measuring line. He says, "I cannot be inconsistent, because I make no profession." Oh, yes, you do, my friend. You make a very loud profession; and it behooves you to live up to it. You profess to believe that a man is wise enough to get along without asking light of God. You profess to believe that a man needs no Bible because his way is clear enough without it. You profess to believe that a man is strong enough to live uprightly without the Church or Christian fellowship to lean on. You profess to believe that a man is good enough for heaven without relying on the Saviour to pardon his sins. And I charge you here and now with inconsistency. You have a creed and you are not living up to it. You are neither wise enough nor strong enough nor

good enough to point your finger at others who are indeed no better than they ought to be. "Cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."

Falling short.—The fact is, we are none of us any better than we ought to be. Christians profess not to be good, but to be trying to be good; and even with divine help they have a hard time of it. Non-Christians profess to be good enough without Christ; and they fall a long way short of it. "We are all John Thompson's bairns." We all alike "keep the word of promise to the ear but break it to the hope." That, however, is not the point. We are all inconsistent with our professions; but we are consistent with our principles and convictions; that is, with "the thoughts of our hearts." Wherefore, it behooves us to pray not so much that we may be consistent with our profession as that we may have clean hearts in the sight of God.

And just here we fall down; for "there is no difference; all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." This is conviction of sin, as it is written, "If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. If our heart condemn us not, we have boldness toward God." It matters not by what criterion we judge ourselves we find that we are not what we ought to be. If we look within, our hearts condemn us; if we look without, our friends and neighbors con-

denn us; in any case we have no recourse but to throw ourselves upon the mercy of God.

The true measure.—At this point the Apostle Paul enters with this suggestion: "If there is therefore any exhortation in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any tender mercies and compassions, . . . *have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus.*" This is the conclusion of the whole matter. We need Christ; we need him for the pardon of past sins; we need him for present duty; we need him for the hope of the future life. We need the mind that was in Christ Jesus so that we may be thinking his thoughts after him.

When Solomon says, "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he," he lays down general principles for the measurement of man; but Paul goes farther; he makes a specific application of those principles when he points to Christ, saying, "Be thou like him." Here, then, is the secret of right living, to bring ourselves into harmony with the thinking of Christ.

So let us examine ourselves. Do we think of God as Christ thought of him? Do we think of life as Christ did; not as a handbreadth of time but as an interminable series of infinite æons for which we are preparing here and now? Do we think of the Bible as Christ thought of it, who knew and loved it, preached and practised it, and never uttered a word or syllable against it? Do

we think of the Cross as he thought of it; not as an accident befalling a martyr, but as a necessity laid upon the sinless Son of God for the deliverance of sinners from the awful grip of sin? Are these our heart thoughts? If in this manner the mind that was in Christ Jesus be also in us, so that we regard the great verities of the spiritual life as he did, and so that our thoughts are framed into great principles and convictions as his were, then our speech will "bewray" us, and our light will so shine that men, seeing our good works, shall glorify God.

WHOSE MAN AM I?

A question of ownership.—God the primal owner.—
Change in ownership.—A second change.—A commercial view?—Under bonds to serve.—Is it universal?—The one condition.

A question of ownership.—Who owns me? Nobody. I am bound, therefore, to stand on my own feet; to do my own thinking, to frame my own convictions, to follow my own conscience, and to insist that no other man shall in any manner whatsoever have the least shadow of proprietary right in me.

At the beginning of our Civil War it was proposed, in the interest of peace, to purchase the slaves of their Southern masters and liberate them. Ralph Waldo Emerson, filled with indignation at the suggestion, wrote his "Boston Hymn," in which occur these words:

"Pay ransom to the owner?

Aye, fill the bag to the brim!

Who is the owner? The slave is owner;

And always was. Pay him!"

There will probably be no difference of opinion as to the rightness of that view. So far as our fellow-

men are concerned they have no right of ownership in us.

God the primal owner.—But when God comes on the premises the question assumes a different phase. By every right he owns us.

In view of this fact there never was a time when a man could properly say, "I am my own man." Adam could not say it. If God had carved an image and inscribed upon its forehead "Jehovah," his proprietary right in the product of his own handiwork would not have been more firmly established than it was in the case of Adam, of whom it is written, "Jehovah God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." If proof were needed of this ownership it is forthcoming and conclusive in the fact that Adam was bound to obey the divine law.

At this point let Jeremiah speak: "The word which came to Jeremiah from Jehovah, saying, Arise and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words. Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he was making a work on the wheels. And when the vessel that he made of the clay was marred in the hand of the potter, he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it. Then the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Behold, as the clay in the potter's hand, so are ye in my hand, O house of Israel!" The same thought is amplified

by Paul where he says: "Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why didst thou make me thus? Or hath not the potter a right over the clay?" Romans 9: 20-21. It is thus apparent that man in his original state of innocence belonged to God, as the creature of his hands, and was subject absolutely to his holy will.

Change in ownership.—But something happened in the Garden of Eden which marked a complete change of ownership. The man who was created in a state of innocence, being carried away by self-will, broke the divine law. In thus taking matters into his own hands he became not his own master, but the servant of sin. Paul puts it on this wise: "I am carnal, sold under sin"; and he proves this by saying, "For that which I do, I know not; for not what I would, that do I practise; but what I hate, that I do. . . . I see a law in my members . . . bringing me into captivity under the law of sin. . . . Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?"

And this is a universal fact. "There is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." We are all under the domination of this "law in our members"; bound by the chains of habitual sin, as really as are the convicts of Louisiana who serve with ball and chain, breaking stone on the highways. "Every one that committeth sin is the bondservant of sin."

A second change.—But here enters Christ; and with him comes another change of ownership. He tells us the reason of his coming into the world: “The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.” In other words, he came to “redeem” us, that is, to *buy us back* from sin. He paid the ransom on Calvary. It was blood, his own precious blood. As sinners we were under the law which says, “The soul that sinneth, it shall die.” He came to assume our place at the bar of the offended law, to meet our obligation, to cancel our debt by paying it, and so to redeem us from the power of sin.

But with that redemption came ownership. “Ye are bought with a price,” says Paul. This is, as it were, the Bill of Sale. It sets forth a transfer of ownership from sin to Christ: and to this transfer there are two witnesses. One of them is Paul the philosopher, who says, “Ye are not your own; ye are bought with a price”; and the other witness is Peter the fisherman, who not only agrees with Paul, but goes farther and designates the purchase price, “not silver and gold, but the precious blood of Christ.” And both of these witnesses arrive at the same conclusion, to wit, that our life service must, by the rule of common honesty, be given to the only-begotten Son of God.

A commercial view?—The one objection made to this transaction is that it is a “commercial view.”

Granted; but what of it? The objection is intended to cast a slur upon the Cross; but, in fact, it pays the highest possible tribute to it.

For the very heart of commerce is honesty. It is founded on "the square deal." If men were to lose their sense of honesty, the bottom would drop out of Wall Street, merchants would close their places of business and ships would lie rotting at their docks. It is commerce that makes the world go 'round; and commerce would be impossible but for the rules of fair dealing which prevail among men. To say that the vicarious view of the Atonement is "commercial" is only another way of saying that it is founded on the principles of even-handed justice. You say this savors of the marketplace? So be it. We want a God whose character shall—to say the least—not be less respectable than that of an honest man.

The Cross is the highest tribute ever paid to what men call "the square deal." It stood for satisfaction to the broken and offended law. To say that God could pardon a sinner without satisfying the law is to magnify his love at the expense of his justice and clothe him with an unscrupulous and sentimental weakness which we deplore in any of our fellow-men. Not so is the God of our salvation. As we stand at Calvary and note the great transaction by which we are delivered from the bondage of sin, we find a logical and conclusive answer to the question, "How can God be just and yet the justifier of the ungodly?" By the paying of

the ransom the Law is fully satisfied; as it is written, "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other."

Under bonds to serve.—The conclusion is unavoidable, "Ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body."

A Christian, who has entered into the benefits of the Atonement by accepting the ransom is under bonds to devote his whole life to the service of Christ. He is obviously not his own. The Karens were accustomed to speak of their missionary, Adoniram Judson, as "Jesus Christ's man." So is every one who professes to follow Christ. It is not enough that he should pay a "tithe" of his substance. A tithe will do for a beginning; but Christ who has ransomed us owns not one-tenth but tenths of us and ours. All my time, all my talents, all my possessions, every drop of my blood, every fibre of my body, every power of my soul, every atom of energy that is in me, belongs absolutely, by a fee simple right, to him.

In 1478 Louis XI, in consideration of a benefit received, as he thought, from the Virgin Mary, made a deed giving her the city of Boulogne; but he was careful to stipulate that the revenues of the city should be reserved for his own personal use. To make a vow of consecration to Christ after that manner is to fall infinitely short of the requirements of the Christian life.

“ When I survey the wondrous cross
 On which the Prince of Glory died,
 My richest gain I count but loss
 And pour contempt on all my pride.

“ Were the whole realm of nature mine
 That were a present far too small;
 Love so amazing, so divine,
 Demands my soul, my life, my all.”

Is it universal?—The matter, however, does not end here. All will agree that Christians are bound by the terms of the ransom. But how about non-Christians? Are they under similar bonds? Here is where the question of common honesty must be brought home to many who are not seriously disposed to consider it. Christ is said to have “tasted death for every man.” If so, then non-Christians as well as the professed followers of Christ were ransomed by his death. What then? Does it follow that all are saved? By no means. The benefits of redemption are not thrust upon unwilling men. God respects the freedom of our sovereign wills. For all who accept him by faith, the ransom is made efficient unto life; while those who reject him are still, of their own volition, in bondage under sin. The sole condition of life is faith; and faith is simply an acceptance of the free gift.

The statement of Scripture is perfectly clear as to this matter: for example “He came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he the

right to become children of God." Again: "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; and he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." Again: "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God sent not the Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through him. He that believeth on him is not judged; but he that believeth not hath been judged already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only-begotten Son of God." Again: "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in him; he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he hath not believed in the witness that God hath borne concerning his Son. And the witness is this, that God gave unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath the life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life. These things have I written unto you, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, even unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God."

The one condition.—If I wanted to deliver a prisoner out of Sing Sing how would I set about it? I might chloroform the guards, pick the lock and bid the prisoner come out; but if he did, would he be free? Not at all. There is something stronger than iron bolts and bars and armed guards that hold him, namely, the Law. He would not

even be a "ticket-of-leave man"; for at every step the Law would still be hounding him. Or suppose I were to go to the Governor and secure a pardon, and presenting that pardon at the doorway of the cell, bid the prisoner come out: would he then be free? Certainly not until he came out. The one thing vitally necessary to his freedom must be done by himself and by nobody else. He must come out! If he declines to do that, his pardon is unavailing; and, to all intents and purposes, he will remain a prisoner all his days.

The conditions of salvation have been met by our Lord Jesus Christ; all but one, namely, personal faith or acceptance; and that must be met by the sinner himself if he would ever be saved from the bondage and penalty of sin. Only believe! That is, accept God's plan of salvation in Christ. Dip down into the water of life and drink it! "He that believeth hath eternal life." Everything depends on a man's saying, "I will! I do!"

I have heard of a man who, having captured an eagle, tethered it to a stake; and it walked around and around until it wore a pathway. At length, moved by compassion, he broke the captive's chain; but habit was so strong that it kept on going around and around in the old groove. Of what value was freedom to it? But there came a moment when it suddenly seemed to realize that its chain was broken; then it looked aloft, spread its wings and mounted into the air. So is it with the soul that

falls in with the divine plan of Redemption; to accept of Christ is to leave the bondage of sin and enter into the glorious liberty of the children of God!

THE DOCTRINE OF THE GOD-MAN

HIS BIRTH

Mistakes as to parentage.—Mary was the mother.—What of Joseph?—Who then was the father of Jesus?—The God-Man.—The Foundation truth.—His character.—His teaching.—His work.—The Kingdom.—Our personal salvation.—A mystery?

Mistakes as to parentage.—The shepherds who first received the annunciation of the Saviour's birth were told that they would find him "wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger"; and going in haste they saw "the thing that had come to pass." On their return they "made known" the wonderful event. When asked if they had seen the parents of the Child they would naturally answer, "Yes; we saw them standing by the manger—a carpenter named Joseph and a peasant girl named Mary." But that was their mistake. There was another in the group at Bethlehem whom they could not see.

If the people of Nazareth had been asked as to the parentage of Jesus, they would have made a similar answer. He had grown up among them. They had seen him in his boyhood playing about the doorway of his mother's house. They had seen

him in the carpenter shop of Joseph learning to make plows and ox-yokes. What would be more natural than for them to say than that he was the son of Joseph and Mary? But that was their mistake. At the beginning of his ministry when, returning from his itinerary among the villages of Galilee, he entered the synagogue and announced to his townsmen that he was the long-looked-for Messiah, they were amazed beyond measure. They had heard rumors of his miracles and of his wonderful preaching, but they were not prepared for this preposterous claim. They were more than amazed; they were "scandalized," exclaiming, "Is not this Jesus whose father and mother we know?"

The multitudes who heard him by the Lake of Gennesaret made the same mistake. On his repeating his claim to Messiahship they answered, "What doest thou for a sign, that we see and believe thee?" He answered, "I am the bread of life! I am come down from Heaven to do the will of him that sent me; and this is his will, that every one that beholdeth the Son and believeth on him shall have eternal life!" And they murmured, saying, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?"

The rejection of the gospel has always been due to a misapprehension respecting the parentage of Jesus. And this is the source and fountain of nearly all the heresies which are current in the world to-day. The man who begins his wrong thinking at Bethlehem will find himself immeasur-

ably farther away from the truth when he reaches Calvary. This being so, it is of vital importance that we should solve the question, "Who were the parents of Jesus?" if we would reach a right conclusion as to other questions which lie farther on.

Mary was the mother of Jesus. All are agreed so far.

The whole world pays reverence to her as the "handmaid of the Lord." Her song of thanksgiving is perpetuated in the service of the universal church: "My soul doth magnify the Lord and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For he hath looked upon the low estate of his bondmaid! For behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed!" And all generations do call her "blessed."

"O wondrous mother, was there ever joy like thine?
To thee it came, that message from the Highest,
Such as to woman ne'er before descended;
The Almighty's shadowing wings thy soul o'erspread,
And with thy life the life of world's was blended!"

But thoughtful Christians call a halt when the song is raised, "Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us!" We decline to accord her a divine homage which she herself would be the first to repudiate. Could she appear to-day in the midst of her devotees, of a certainty she would say as the angel did to kneeling John, "See that thou do it not; for I am thy fellow-servant. Worship God!"

Say of me as the Heavenly said, "Thou art
The blesseddest of women"—
Not holiest or noblest—no high name
Whose height misplaced may pierce me like a shame
When I sit meek in Heaven!

What of Joseph?—But the question has to do also with Joseph; and here is the possibility of the great mistake. Was he the father of Jesus or not?

In the group at Bethlehem he stands with perplexity in his eyes. For in the great drama which is being enacted he is, however vitally interested, a mere looker-on.

His character is written in the brief monograph, "He was a righteous man." If there must needs be a Calendar of Saints by all means let him be accorded a place in it. His simple faith, humility, devotion to principle and acquiescence in the divine will make him worthy of the highest honor due to mortal man.

On receiving the announcement that he had been appointed to rest under an imputation of dishonor, in pursuance of the divine plan of redemption, he "arose and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him." All his life he carried in his breast a great secret which the world knew not. His neighbors looked askance, hinting at a bar sinister on his domestic shield, but he heeded them not. A less humble, less righteous, less magnanimous, less consecrated man would have revolted against the shameful imputations which were passed upon him;

but without a murmur he took his assigned place and filled it.

He was the guardian of Jesus in his early years. He watched over him, led him to the synagogue and the Levitical school, taught him as an apprentice in the carpenter shop and took him up to Jerusalem to attend the annual feasts. Doubtless he felt thankful for being permitted to occupy this relation to the supernatural Boy. So, I say, if there must needs be a Calendar of Saints let us thus revere him. But he was not the father of Jesus.

Who, then, was the father of Jesus?—God. So runs the record: “And the angel said unto Mary, The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee; wherefore also the holy thing which is begotten shall be called the Son of God.”

So run the prophecies, also. No sooner had man sinned than the promise was given, “The Seed of woman shall bruise the serpent’s head.” And clearer and ever clearer grow the predictions in the succeeding pages of Scripture: “Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son and shall call his name Immanuel, which being interpreted is ‘God with us’ ”; and again, “For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder and his name be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his

government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from henceforth even forever. The zeal of Jehovah of hosts will perform this."

And this, moreover, is the claim of Jesus. He arrogated to himself the title of Messiah, that is, the promised "Seed of Woman" who was to bruise the serpent's head. He assumed the Messianic title, "Son of God." He repeatedly affirmed that he was "the only-begotten Son of God." We are all sons of God by creation. Some are also sons by adoption, as it is written, "Ye received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are children of God." But in all the history of the children of men there is only One of whom it can be said that he was begotten of God. And Jesus claims to be that One. As such, all true believers receive him. They have seen "his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

The God-Man.—This view of the divine paternity of Jesus is necessary to the validity of the gospel. He came into the world to suffer and to save. He could only save by suffering; inasmuch as expiation must be made for sin. He must be "very man" in order to suffer; and he must be "very God" in order to save, since his suffering must be sufficient

to atone for the whole world's sin. He must therefore be both man and God. He is "very man" because he was "of a woman born"; he is "very God" because he was conceived by the miraculous overshadowing of the Spirit. His nature is thus unique and singular. There is in all the universe no other who can be called *Theanthropos*, that is, God-man. And, for this reason, "there is none other name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved." He only is able, through his vicarious passion, to save unto the uttermost all who have come unto him. And to my mind it is inconceivable that salvation could have been provided for us in any other way.

The foundation truth.—The truth thus formulated as to the parentage of Jesus is the primal postulate and foundation of our religion. For this reason we are accustomed to say, in our historic creed, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary."

But what difference does it make whether we thus believe or not? The "liberal" pastor of one of our evangelical churches makes this statement: "I cannot see that it makes any difference, so far as the practical application of Christianity is concerned, whether we believe that God or Joseph was the father of Jesus." In fact, however, it makes all the difference in the world.

His character.—Our estimate of the character of Christ depends upon it. He was either what he claimed to be or he was not. He claimed, over and over again, to be the only-begotten Son of God. He spoke of his pre-existence with the Father, and announced that when his redemptive work was finished he would return to reassume "the glory which he had with the Father before the world was." He claimed to be the Messiah, saying in clearest terms, "I that speak unto thee am he!" He was tried for blasphemy, the charge being that he had made himself "equal with God." The man who presided at the trial said to him, "I adjure thee, by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the son of God"; he answered, "Thou hast said," using the strongest form of affirmation that was possible, and added, "Hereafter ye shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven!" He was then and there convicted, on his own testimony, of the charge of blasphemy; and was put to death for making himself equal with God. If he was not what he claimed to be, then he stands before the world as a self-convicted charlatan and falsifier. To affirm that he was a good man and nothing more is simply absurd. He was either the only-begotten Son of God, or else he was a false claimant to divine honors, and as such it is difficult to see how any thoughtful or self-respecting man could for a moment believe in him.

His teaching.—The trustworthiness of his teaching, also, depends upon the answer to this question respecting his parentage. If his affirmations with respect to himself are discredited, what dependence is to be put upon his presentation of the great doctrines of the spiritual life? *Falsus in uno, falsus in omnibus* is an accepted rule in civil courts. If the truth of your witness is impugned at one point, his entire testimony passes under a cloud. If you expose the duplicity of an explorer who says that he reached the summit of Mount McKinley, you naturally lift your eyebrows when he affirms that he has discovered the North Pole. How preposterous, then, for men to insist on the trustworthiness of the doctrinal and ethical teachings of Jesus while denying his repeated affirmation that he was the only-begotten Son of God!

His work.—The efficacy of his redemptive work, also, depends upon it. There is a vital correlation between the divine birth of Jesus and his vicarious passion. I have heard of a geode, a dull-appearing stone, which when broken disclosed a mass of crystals arranged in the form of a cross. So at Bethlehem we observe the outline of the atonement. If you deny the miraculous birth of Jesus you reduce his redemptive work to *nil*. For it is unthinkable that any mere man could take the burden of the world's sin upon him and pay a ransom for the misdeeds of all the children of men.

The Kingdom.—And the coming of his Kingdom depends upon it. We are accustomed to say that the Cross stands as the center of history and that all civilization is explained by it; but at the foot of the Cross stands the manger. Here lies the Son of Man who is mighty to help; here lies the Son of God who is able to save unto the uttermost; here lies the God-man who is destined to be King over all and blessed forever. The armies of all history march around this birth-scene. The thrones of the Cæsars totter in the grasp of the Christ-child, because his arm is “the arm of God made bare.” The Church of the centuries kneels at the manger to offer its prayer, “Thy Kingdom come,” and believes in the efficacy of that prayer because the Christ-child is “Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God”; wherefore the gates of hell shall not prevail against him.

Our personal salvation, moreover, depends upon it. Here is the ladder by which we ascend out of sin into salvation: “And without controversy great is the mystery of Godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory” (I Timothy 3:16). The foot of that ladder is at Bethlehem and its summit is close upon the throne of God.

A mystery?—Yes; great is the mystery! As the cherubim bent in reverent perplexity over the

Ark of the Covenant, so do we devoutly ponder the great truth. "The angels desire to look into it!"

But what if it be a mystery? Is that a sufficient ground for rejecting it? We are compassed about by mysteries. We do not insist that a fact shall be explained before we accept it. All that we can reasonably ask is that it shall not be contra-rational. In the mystery of the Incarnation there is nothing that antagonizes a single law of human thought. We confess that it is beyond us. But so are all great truths, and particularly those of the spiritual province. Faith is "the evidence of things not seen." We walk by faith, live by faith, are saved by faith. "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever *believeth* on him might not perish but have eternal life." "He that *believeth* on him is not judged; he that *believeth not* hath been judged already, because he hath not *believed* on the name of the only-begotten Son of God."

So we reverently stand at the manger and touch the swaddling-bands of Jesus, as Thomas touched the scars of his passion, saying with holy awe and adoration, "My Lord and my God!"

HIS CHARACTER

That righteous man.—Unique in his birth.—Unique in his life.—Unique in his death.—Unique in his influence.—The great question.

That righteous man.—It is recorded that when Jesus was on trial before Pilate a messenger arrived with a letter for Pilate from his wife, to this effect:

“Have thou nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him. CLAUDIA.”

The probability is that Claudia had been thinking much of Jesus; for at this time his singular claims were being discussed by all. If we gaze intently at any object for a considerable time its image will remain upon the retina after we have closed our eyes. So what was more natural than that Claudia, after thus thinking of Jesus, should dream of him; and what more natural than that, as a loving wife, she should thus entreat her husband to refrain from wronging “that righteous man.”

We are not informed as to the effect of her letter. In all probability her husband’s first impulse was to exclaim, “How like a woman!” So little

did she know of the demands of his office. He would have been only too glad to "have nothing to do with" Jesus; but that unfortunately was out of the question. He could convict him or he could acquit him; but he could not "have nothing to do with him."

It would appear, however, in the light of subsequent events that he was not uninfluenced by his wife's appeal. He took advantage of every possible subterfuge to escape the responsibility thrust upon him; but finally, when obliged to face the issue, did it like the coward that he was. Amid the clamor of the multitude he called for a basin of water and washing his hands, bade the people bear witness that he was "innocent of the blood of this righteous man." And then, casting the frightful die, he added, "Take ye him and crucify him."

The point which I wish to emphasize is brought out in a single word, used by Claudia in her letter and repeated by Pilate in his protestation of innocence: namely, the word *Dikaios*, here rendered, "that righteous man."

The full significance of the expression does not appear on the surface of the narrative. In order to understand it we must go back four hundred years to Plato, the foremost of the Greek philosophers, who in his "Republic" portrayed an ideal community not seen as yet but likely to be realized in the Golden Age. It was the worthy citizen of this Republic who was characterized as *Dikaios*, "the righteous or just man." The term was used,

in its largest sense, to designate one possessed of all the manly virtues in harmonious proportion, a four-square man, a symmetrical man, therefore the ideal man.

It is not affirmed that either Claudia or her husband was mindful of all this when they spoke of Jesus in that way; but all the more value is to be placed upon their tribute on that account. If all the glowing phrases which have been unintentionally applied to Jesus by his enemies could be gathered together, what a mass of indirect evidence we should have as to the character of that just man!

It is my present purpose to show as briefly as possible how perfectly the "righteous man" in the judgment hall of Pilate answers to Dikaïos in the ideal Republic of Plato; and how conclusively the inadvertent testimony of the non-Christian world proves him to be the ideal man.

Unique in his birth.—Jesus' birth sets him apart, in a singular manner, from all other children of men. Adam was created in innocence, without spot or blemish until he fell. Not a child of Adam has ever since been born without the taint of heredity. The only exception is Christ who, for that reason among others, is called "the second Adam"; since he inherited no sin. In this he stands solitary and alone; the spotless Son of Man.

Unique in his life.—His life, likewise, was without sin. He kept what Adam lost: his first estate.

He faced the forbidden tree but did not eat of it.

A man's life is expressed in two things, words and works; or, if you please, preaching and practice. And the perfect life is that in which the preaching is truth and the practice is righteousness, to correspond with it.

The words of Jesus were truth. In his preaching he set forth the great verities of the spiritual life; and he did this not with an appeal to any ulterior authority such as "Thus saith the Lord," but always on his own authority, saying, "Verily, verily, I say unto you."

And his character fitted into his teaching like an indenture. Cicero says somewhere that, after an examination of the philosophers he had arrived at the conclusion that, while they had much to say about truth there was not one among them who lived up to it. But of Christ it has been truly affirmed that he "brought the bottom of his life up to the top of his light." His challenge was: "Which of you convicteth me of sin?" And the answer was in the words of the magistrate who sentenced him to death, "I find no fault in him at all."

The perfection of Jesus, however, lay not simply in this negative sort of innocency but in the positive practice of virtue. His life is written in the brief monograph, "He went about doing good." His miracles were miracles of mercy. He is the only man who ever lived who left the world a little

brighter and better with every step he took in passing through it.

Unique in his death.—In his death, also, he showed himself the just man. The Cross is the world's supreme exhibit of self-denying love. It is written, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends"—"but God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

But we cannot stop here. There is no end of false and foolish sentiment with respect to the love of God. Love that does not pay deference to Justice is as meaningless as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. The only praiseworthy love is that which joins hands with all the other graces that make a man like God.

And this is the love which was set forth pre-eminently on the Cross. The mission of Christ was to save sinners. He found them under the sentence of the law: "The soul that sinneth it shall die." He could not override that law; because, whatever else he was he must be *Dikaïos*, the righteous man. But how, then, could he save sinners? "How shall God be just and yet the justifier of the ungodly?" It can only be by the payment of a ransom that shall satisfy the law. For this reason our Saviour "bare our sins in his own body on the tree." He thus became "the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." He satisfied love; he satisfied law and truth

and justice. Satisfaction and reconciliation go together. Thus, by the way of the Cross, all who believe may return to God.

The righteous man did not die like other men. Here, as in his birth and character, he stands solitary and alone. He died not for himself but vicariously; so that multitudes are born of the travail of his soul. A host of sinners, going down into his sepulchre as "partakers of his death" emerge triumphantly with him into the kingdom of life. It was with some faint perception of this tremendous fact that the infidel Rousseau was moved to exclaim, "This Jesus died like a God!"

Unique in his influence.—The influence of Christ along the centuries bears witness to him as the ideal man. He has been the commanding figure in the history of the world. On his triumphal entry into Jerusalem the people, leaning out of their doorways and looking from their lattices, asked "Who is this?" The question is vastly more pertinent now: "Who is this that marches through history with ever increasing millions trooping after him?" Not believers only, but the whole world answers, "This is *Dikaïos*, the righteous man."

But this is not enough. The word *Dikaïos* does not meet the case. The man who stands thus solitary and alone among millions is a miracle, an incomprehensible marvel, a problem so hopelessly intricate that the introduction of a divine factor is required to solve it.

When Napoleon was at Saint Helena, in the enforced retirement that followed his boisterous campaigns, he faced, with all the powers of his mighty intellect, this problem of the Unaccountable Man. Not a few of his devoted friends had been carried away on the flood-tide of infidelity which at that time was sweeping everything before it. On one occasion, when General Bertrand had been speaking of Jesus as a man of commanding genius, he interrupted him to say, "I know men; and I tell you Jesus Christ was more than a man. Superficial minds see a resemblance between him and the founders of empires; but there is the distance of infinity between them. As for me I recognize those great men as beings like myself; they have performed their lofty parts, but there was nothing to prove them divine. They have had foibles which ally them with me. It is not so with Christ. Everything in him astonishes me! His spirit overawes me; his will confounds me; he stands a being by himself. His thoughts and principles are not to be explained by human organization or the nature of things. His birth and the history of his life, the profundity of his doctrine which grapples with the mightiest difficulties and solves them; his gospel, his kingdom, his march across the agts; these are too deep a mystery for me! They plunge me into reveries from which I find no escape. The nearer I approach him, the more I perceive that everything is above me. At his voice all things return to order. The soul conquers its sov-

ereignty. What a master is this! With what authority does he teach! Who will presume to lift his voice against an intrepid voyager who recounts the marvels of lands which he alone has had the boldness to visit? Christ is that voyager. I search in vain through history to find his peer. He died an object of contempt and left a Gospel which has been called 'the foolishness of the cross.' What a mysterious symbol! And what a tempest it provoked! On the one side all the furies; on the other gentleness and infinite resignation. And with what result? You speak of Cæsar and Alexander, of their conquests and the enthusiasm which they kindled in the hearts of their soldiers; but can you conceive of a dead man making conquests with an army devoted to his memory? Can you conceive of Cæsar from the depth of his mausoleum watching over the destinies of Rome? Yet such is the history of the Christian invasion and the conquest of the world. Such is the power of the Christian's God! We have founded empires—Cæsar and Alexander and Charlemagne and I—we have founded empires upon force; but Christ has founded an empire on love. And at this hour millions would die for him. What a proof of his divinity! Now that I am at Saint Helena, chained upon this rock, where are my friends? My life once shone with a royal brilliance; but disaster overtook me and the gold became dim. Behold the destiny of him whom the world calls Napoleon the Great! What

an abyss between my misery and the eternal reign of Christ!" For a moment the exiled emperor was silent and then, with a broken voice, he added, "My friends, if you do not perceive that Jesus Christ is God, I did wrong to place you in command of my army." ¹

To my mind this reasoning is sound. In conceding that Jesus was "the just man," with all that it involves, we have gone so far that, by the necessities of sound reason, we are bound to go farther and pronounce him what he claimed to be, the veritable Son of God.

This was his claim. He called himself "the Son of Man," a term generally understood as referring to the long-looked-for Messiah. He called himself, also, with equal emphasis, "the Son of God"; and more than that, "the only-begotten Son of God"; that is, so to speak, bone of God's bone and flesh of his flesh, and therefore his very equal. He claimed a singular union with God, saying, "I and my Father are one." How could he be only a good man? If he were no more than that, then his enemies were right in affirming that he was guilty of blasphemy and deserved to die.

The great question is before us: What think ye of this Jesus? He sits in the place of judgment as he sat at Gabbatha before Pilate that day. What shall be done with him? The Scripture

¹The words of Napoleon have here been abbreviated, but with no essential change.

says that he was what he claimed to be. History records his triumphs and forces the inquiry, "Were these the doings of a man among men?" The Church on earth unites with the innumerable host of heaven in the song: "Fairer is he than all the fair among the sons of men." But what say you?

The centurion who had charge of the crucifixion was moved to confess, after witnessing the great tragedy, "Verily, this was a righteous man!" The word he used was the familiar *Dikaios*. But this did not satisfy him. The great problem was struggling in his breast. As he rode away from Calvary the shadows of night were gathering and lights were kindling in the homes of Jerusalem. Looking backward he saw the dark effigy of the cross against the sky. Then came the sober second thought. The truth like a sunburst smote upon him. This Jesus was more than the just man! And in the deep conviction of his soul he gave utterance to the only possible solution of the greatest of all problems: "Verily, this was the Son of God!"

HIS INAUGURAL SERMON

Two manifestoes.—Not a sermon for all.—Not a gospel sermon.—Not a foundation sermon.—Not a summary.—Not a sermon of salvation.—Two inferences.

Two manifestoes.—There have been two occasions in history when great political manifestoes were issued under the direct authority of God.

One of these was when the children of Israel were encamped at Sinai. They had just been delivered from the house of their bondage. It was a mob of fugitive slaves that thronged forth in mad disorder with the footfall of a pursuing army behind them. God's purpose was to organize this mob into a nation; and with this in view he led them to Sinai, where they encamped for a year. He there gave them their Constitution, an elaborate Code of Laws. The nucleus of that Code is the Decalogue, the most notable of all ethical symbols; which has furnished the basic principles of the jurisprudence of civilized nations all along the ages. The camp was then broken up, and for thirty-nine years the people wandered in the wilderness, learning in the school of experience and developing slowly in civil life and character. At the

end of that period, when they crossed the Jordan into the land prepared for their occupancy, they were a full-fledged nation, with three well-defined branches of government, to wit: Legislative, Judicial and Executive, and with a standing army so well marshaled and mobilized that the enemy was scattered before it as chaff from the threshing floor. This government, theocratic in form, was ideally perfect, and, apart from its standing army, is destined to be realized again in the Golden Age.

The other occasion referred to was when Christ gathered his disciples at Olivet and preached the Sermon on the Mount. His thirty years of preparation were over and his ministry was now beginning. He was about to set up his Kingdom, which was simply a revival of the old economy with an omission of its temporary factors and a new emphasis put upon its essential principles. In the Sermon on the Mount we have the Constitution and By-laws of the Kingdom of Christ: a Kingdom which is to continue with ever-enlarging borders until it extends "where'er the sun doth his successive journeys run."

As to the eloquence, moral power and pre-eminent value of this Sermon there is no difference of opinion. Its praises are sung enthusiastically even by those who are at odds with the religion of Christ. In all quarters the most glowing words of commendation are lavished upon it.

But there is a grave misunderstanding in many quarters as to its character and intent. If it were

more clearly understood it might not be so generally eulogized. My present purpose is to indicate what I believe to be some serious and more or less prevalent mistakes about it.

Not a sermon for all.—It is a mistake to speak of the Sermon on the Mount as “everybody’s sermon.”

It was addressed distinctly to the disciples; as it is written, “And when he was set, his disciples came unto him; and he opened his mouth and taught them, saying.” In this respect it is like the sacerdotal prayer of Jesus recorded in John 17. As a rule the prayers of Jesus were comprehensive in their scope; but in that particular prayer he was thinking of his disciples only, as he said, “I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for those whom thou hast given me.” In like manner, many of the sermons of Jesus were addressed to the multitude; but the Sermon on the Mount, which was to furnish forth the ruling principles of his Kingdom, was for those only who were in hearty accord with him in the setting up of that Kingdom on earth.

This was the Inaugural Address of the King. It was a pronouncement of the rules and regulations which were to control the lives of his subjects. For this reason it began very properly with the Beatitudes, in which the characteristics of citizenship are set forth; namely, poverty of spirit, meekness and mercy, noble aspiration, pureness of

heart, peaceableness and patience in suffering for the truth's sake. To such citizens as these and to such only he said, "Ye are the salt of the earth; but if the salt have lost its savor wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out and to be trodden under foot of men." And again, "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father."

Not a gospel sermon.—It is a mistake to characterize the Sermon on the Mount as a "gospel sermon."

It is, on the contrary, distinctly a Law sermon. Its deliverance is a clear and far-reaching echo of the deliverance of Sinai. "I am come," said Jesus, "not to destroy the law, but to fulfill it." It places a startling emphasis on the Ten Commandments; and therein it is searching as fire and penetrating as acid. Listen to this: "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old-time, Thou shalt not kill; but I say unto you that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment." And listen to this: "Ye have heard how it was said by them of old-time, Thou shalt not commit adultery; but I say unto you that a lustful look hath in it the sinfulness of an overt act." Observe the severity of these additional words, "If thy right eye causeth thee to stumble, pluck it out and cast it from thee; and if thy right

hand causeth thee to stumble, cut it off and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish and not thy whole body go into hell."

It is perfectly clear that in this Sermon there is no relief from the severity of the Moral Law, but rather an added force. The disciples of Christ, as citizens of the Kingdom are enjoined to perfect obedience. They are to journey by a narrow way and enter through a strait gate. The standard erected here is nothing less than perfection. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord! shall enter into the kingdom; but he that doeth the will of my Father. Be ye, therefore, perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." In case of default, provision is elsewhere made for pardon; but the rule of conduct here laid down is rigid obedience. This is the freedom with which the Son makes free. True freedom is perfect obedience to perfect law. This is the franchise of the Kingdom; "the glorious liberty of the children of God."

Not a foundation sermon.—It is a mistake to speak of the Sermon on the Mount as a "foundation sermon."

It is rather a superstructural sermon. The foundations of the Kingdom or of the Church, which is the great organism through which God is working for the establishment of his Kingdom on earth, is laid not in a moral code but in a creed.

At the time when Peter made his good confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," our Lord said of it, "On this rock will I build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." In other words, the foundation of the Church of Christ is faith in him. His Kingdom is made up of those who are entitled to citizenship by reason of the fact that they have accepted him as Priest to make atonement for their sins, as Prophet to instruct them in the great verities of the spiritual life, and as King to defend and rule over them. Thus, "the Church's one foundation is Jesus Christ our Lord."

The Sermon on the Mount is distinctly an ethical symbol; wherefore it can be only superstructural; since works are the fruit of faith expressed in conduct and character. It was singularly appropriate, for this reason, that the great Sermon which was intended as a rule of conduct for the disciples of Christ should end in this wise: "Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man which built his house upon a rock; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house; and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man which built his house upon the sand; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house; and it fell, and great was the fall of it."

Not a summary.—It is a mistake to regard the Sermon on the Mount as a summary of the teachings of Christ.

It is, indeed, a mere fragment of his teaching, by no means to be considered as exhausting the demand which his gospel makes upon us. On April 30th, 1798, Washington entered on his first administration as President of the United States. In front of the national building on the corner of Wall and Nassau streets in New York he delivered his inaugural address, which, as all agree, was full of sound political sense. But to intimate that his address on that occasion contained all that was necessary for the political welfare of our country, so that the Constitution, the enactments of Congress and decisions of Courts are entirely negligible, would be to say a very foolish thing. So, without minimizing the splendid significance of the Sermon on the Mount, we insist that it does not furnish an exhaustive and conclusive statement of the religion of Christ.

It must be taken in connection with his other teachings; for example, his conversation with Nicodemus in which he said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except one be born anew he cannot see the kingdom of God"; and also, "He that believeth on the Son is not judged: he that believeth not is judged already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only-begotten Son of God." It must be taken in connection with his denunciation of the Pharisees, "Woe unto you,

hypocrites; who make long prayers at the corner of the streets and devour widows' houses; ye are as whited sepulchres, fair without, but within full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. How shall ye escape the damnation of hell?" It must be taken in connection with his farewell address in the upper room, wherein he said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father. How sayest thou then, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father and the Father in me?" It must be taken in connection with the great commission which he gave his disciples on the Mount of Ascension: "All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore and evangelize: and lo, I am with you alway." The first word and the last word and every word of Jesus must be received by those who are loyal to him. It will not answer to take a mere fraction of his teaching and build our faith upon it.

Not a sermon of salvation.—The greatest mistake of all is made by those who regard the Sermon on the Mount as a sermon of salvation.

It was not so intended, inasmuch as it was addressed to those who were already saved by the grace of God. You will find here no reference to the cross, or to justifying faith or to the blood that cleanseth from sin. The moment a man accepts Christ he is delivered from the bondage of the Law by coming into perfect accord with it. The man who would live under the Law must keep

it; for if he break it he will die under it. "By the deeds of the Law, therefore, shall no flesh be justified." There is no justification except by the free grace of God.

Two inferences.—Two things follow from the foregoing considerations: the first is that the Sermon on the Mount does not contain all the truth which must enter into the fabric of the Church. Here is where Ian Maclaren errs, in his "Mind of the Master," where he says, "No Church since the early centuries has had the courage to formulate an ethical creed, for even those bodies of Christians which have no written theological creed yet have implicit affirmations or denial of doctrine as their basis. But imagine a body of Christians who should take their stand on this sermon of Jesus and construct their creed on his lines. Imagine how it would read: 'I believe in the Fatherhood of God; I believe in the words of Jesus; I believe in the clean heart; I believe in the unworldly life; I believe in the Beatitudes; I promise to trust God and to follow Christ; to forgive my enemies and to seek after the righteousness of God.' Could any form of words be more elevating, more persuasive or more alluring? Do they not thrill the heart and strengthen the conscience? Liberty of thought is allowed; liberty of sinning is alone denied. Who would refuse to sign this creed? They would come from the East and the West and the North and the South to

its call; and even they who would hesitate to bind themselves to a crusade so arduous would admire it and long to be worthy." Granted! But when they came together these people would not constitute a Christian Church; for they would not have subscribed to the fundamental principles of the Gospel of Christ. Their "ethical creed" would be no creed at all. An ethical creed is a distinct contradiction of terms. A creed of beliefs is one thing and a code of ethics is quite another thing. They do run in parallel lines. They complement and supplement each other; but it is foolish and preposterous to confuse them. It is enough to say of an "ethical creed" that it saves nobody because it has no color of redeeming blood upon it.

The final inference is that the Sermon on the Mount was not intended to be and is not a sufficient guide for sinners seeking the way of spiritual life. If we are ever saved it will not be on account of personal merit but wholly by reason of what Christ has done for us. We may learn a lesson from the simple words that once fell from the lips of a peasant child who was led into the audience room at Windsor Court. She stood for a while in silent awe, her eyes dazzled by the magnificence of gold and purple on every side, and then quaintly repeated the verse:

"Jesus, thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress:
'Mid flaming worlds, in these arrayed,
With joy shall I lift up my head."

The only work that commends a sinner to the divine favor is that which Christ himself indicated when he said, "This is the work of God, that ye believe in him whom God hath sent." If we are ever saved, therefore, it will not be by the rules of conduct which are laid down in the Sermon on the Mount but by that fundamental rule of faith which precedes it, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." Wherefore sinners are directed not to Olivet but to Calvary, where Christ bare our sins in his own body on the tree.

HIS TEACHING

The Teacher.—The test.—Into court.—The Teacher's claim.—The documents.—Oral testimony.—Personal experience.—Summing up.

The Teacher.—One of the greatest discourses of Christ, in which he clearly stated the authority of his teaching, was that given in the seventh chapter of John's Gospel. He was speaking in the Porch of the Temple to a company of people divided in opinion concerning him. There were some who believed that his teaching was true and that he was what he claimed to be. There were others, including the Scribes and Pharisees, who were so opposed to him that they were even then plotting his death. The Teacher himself put the case calmly and dispassionately before them, on this wise: "If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God."

The Teaching had to do distinctively with the way of Salvation. The method of the Teacher was exclusive; that is, he ruled out all other plans of salvation and insisted that his was the only way. It is not strange, therefore, that there was a difference of opinion among his hearers, or that there is such a difference at this day. The question involved is of vital importance. If the Teaching be

true, it is absolutely and exclusively true; if false, then the believers of the past have walked in a dream; they that have fallen asleep in Christ have perished, and we are like drowning men grasping at straws. Then the Church is a masterpiece of folly, Christendom a blot on the map of the world, the progress of these nineteen centuries a phosphorescent gleam in the blackness of darkness, life a labyrinth without a clew, and death a plunge into an unbroken night. But if the Teaching be true, what then? All other systems of so-called religion and philosophy are false, skepticism is blindness, indifference is a fatal mistake, and the rejection of Christ is the unpardonable sin.

The test proposed by the Teacher as to his Teaching is an eminently fair one. It is in fact a proposition to submit the question to a jury. The sole qualification of service on this jury is that a man shall be "willing to do God's will," that is, he must be in accord with the mind of God. As God is truth, this is equivalent to saying that he must be willing to see the truth and follow it. He must disabuse his mind of prejudice. One who is self-opinionated is never willing to do the divine will. One must be ready to go wherever the evidence leads him. It was one of the wise sayings of Aristotle that "the mind's eye is not capable of right judgment unless it be virtuous," that is, unless it be in line with truth, which is the mind of God.

Into court.—It is our present purpose to bring the Teaching into court in pursuance of this proposition of the Teacher, and submit the evidence to a jury of fair-minded men. The one thing necessary is that which applies in the empaneling of any jury; to wit, the decks shall be cleared of prejudice. Otherwise, to proceed with the argument would be as hopeless as was Galileo's attempt to prove the existence of the moons of Jupiter to a body of inquisitors, who refused to look through his telescope for fear they should have no case against him.

We want a jury of "honest doubters." Let there be no mistake at this point, however, for many a man who thinks himself an "honest doubter" is in fact a stubborn unbeliever. It has been said that "doubt is the agony of a noble soul or the frivolity of a fool." An honest doubter is one who, realizing the importance of the issue, rests not day nor night until he arrives at the truth concerning it. He puts away all preconceptions and, with a clear conscience and a single purpose, addresses himself to the problem in hand. He seeks no neutral ground. As to the Teacher and his Teaching, he perceives that there is only one alternative; either to receive Christ at his word, in which case he will forthwith close in with his overtures and devote his life to him; or else to reject him outright as a self-deluded fanatic or a willful impostor, unworthy of faith or confidence. "How long go ye limping between the two sides? If Jehovah

be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him."

Is the reader thus prepared to canvass the evidence? Is his mind free from bias and open to conviction? If not, he is peremptorily challenged; because no amount of knowledge or scholarship can entitle him to pass upon the merits of the case. If, however, he is sure of his willingness to do the will of God in the serious quest of truth, he is competent to hear the evidence which is now to be submitted and to pass upon it.

The Teacher's claim.—It will be proper to enter the claim of the Teacher himself as to the Teaching.

He says that he came from the glory which he had with the Father before the world was, to suffer and die vicariously in the behalf of sinful men, to the end that salvation might be assured to all who believe in him.

This claim must stand upon its own merits. It is not enough to reply, as the Pharisees did, that the Teacher is a mere carpenter, unfamiliar with the terminology of the schools. What difference does that make, if the Teaching be true? It is related of John Williams, of Raratonga, that, hearing on one of his missionary tours that an attack was meditated upon his home, he sent a message in all haste. Not having any writing materials at hand, he wrote with charcoal on a chip the word "Danger!" and sent it by a swift runner to his

wife. Was not that warning as true and valid as if it had been embossed on parchment? So, here, the question as to the Teaching of Jesus must be determined on its own merits; and with this understanding it is offered as evidence in the case.

The documents.—We desire to enter, also, a mass of documentary evidence of three sorts, to wit:

Exhibit A.—The Bible.

And, though we believe the Bible to be inspired and therefore true from beginning to end, we do not for the moment insist on that view, but are willing to waive it. All that we ask is that the Bible shall be regarded with the same respect as other "literature." It consists of two volumes; one of which, the Old Testament, is full of the testimony of prophets who were looking forward to the coming of Christ; and the other, the New Testament, of the testimony of the apostles concerning Him. These apostles profess to have been eye-witnesses of the incidents which they relate and to have heard the Teachings from the lips of the Teacher himself. "That which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled, concerning the word of life (and the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare unto you the life, the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us) : that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you also."

Exhibit B.—A vast number of Depositions, made by witnesses along a period of nineteen hundred years; consisting of Creeds, Confessions and apologetic writings of various sorts.

In these are embraced the controversies of the ages. The witnesses who bear this testimony are entitled to a respectful hearing as to the Teaching, because in many cases they adventured their lives upon the truth of it. Here are the "noble army of martyrs" who faced the sword and fagot fires and the lions of the amphitheatre in defence of their faith. "They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were tempted, they were slain with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goat-skins; being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated," for the truth's sake. All of these testify with one voice, "We believe that the Teaching is true and that Christ was what he claimed to be."

Exhibit C.—The entire history of the Christian Era; not only that written by Christians but by unbelievers as well.

It is our purpose to present in this body of history a corroboration of the statement of Christ that his Teaching was to be like leaven, put into dough and destined to leaven the whole lump. It is a singular fact, which must be accounted for in some way, that the progress of civilization during these centuries has been along the line of the Teaching of Christ. The civilization of the world is embraced in a charmed circle called "Christendom" after his name. If you draw that circle on

a map you will shut out barbarism and darkness, and you will find you have shut in light and liberty and humanity. It thus appears that the heaven has been doing its work. The Teaching has been like the torch in the hand of Milton's Angel of the Morning"; as it has come down along the ages, institutions of light and freedom and humanity have sprung up along its way.

Oral testimony.—We are now prepared to summon living witnesses to the truth of the Teaching. How many? "At the mouth of two witnesses or three every word may be established." Are there "two or three" to certify to the Teaching? Are there a hundred, a thousand, a million? Nay, there are hundreds of millions, from every known kindred and nation, people and tribe. Was there ever such an array of witnesses in any court? And all tell the same story of faith in the Teacher and his Teaching. One by one they say, "This poor man cried, and Jehovah heard him and saved him out of all his troubles." They say with one accord, "I was under conviction of sin, and he blotted out my sins." They say, "I have tried the Teaching and found it a strong staff to lean on: and I have tried the Teacher, and found him to be a very present help in time of trouble." They say, "I know him whom I have believed and that he is able to guard that which I have committed unto him against that day."

It is quite in order for any juror to cross-examine

these witnesses. The fact that many of them are common people, unaccustomed to forensic usages, will not exempt them.

Question: You say you are a Christian?

Answer: I am.

Q.—What do you mean by it?

A.—That I am a disciple of Christ and am trying to follow him.

Q.—What is your creed?

A.—The Teaching of Christ.

Q.—What is your code of morals?

A.—The Teaching of Christ.

Q.—What is your hope of immortality?

A.—The Teaching of Christ.

Q.—Who is this Christ?

A.—The Teacher sent from God.

Q.—What is this Teaching?

A.—It is the sum and substance of all truth bearing on the spiritual life.

Q.—What has Christ done for you?

A.—He has pardoned my sins.

Q.—How do you know it?

A.—I have the witness of his Spirit with my spirit that I am born of God.

Q.—Do you think yourself perfect?

A.—By no means; but I follow on if that I may be apprehended of him.

Q.—What is your religion?

A.—To carry out the Teaching in my daily life.

Q.—How highly do you value the Teaching?

A.—I would die rather than give it up.

What is to be said in answer to the testimony of this great cloud of witnesses? The obvious thing to do is to impugn their character and so break down their credibility if possible. Are they people of bad character as compared with others? Are they "vile fellows of the rabble"? Oh, no. It is conceded that no Christian is what he ought to be; but, taking Christians by and large, they are the best people in the world. The converts in a mid-African missionary station will compare favorably with their pagan neighbors. Or, to come nearer home, take your stand on the corner of Broadway and select the first thousand Christians from among the passers-by and then a thousand non-Christians at random; line them up and let a just comparison be made between them. We will abide the issue. It was by such comparison that Alexander Pope, himself an unbeliever, was moved to make this historic definition, "A Christian is the highest style of man."

It is because of the general impression that the highest standard of conduct is set forth in the Teaching of Christ that men point their fingers at every Christian who goes wrong. Why is not attention called to an infidel who violates the laws of common honesty? Because the expected has happened. When a follower of Christ goes wrong, he is pilloried because the world, instructed in the ethics of the Teaching, had reason to expect better things of him.

Personal experience.—It remains to suggest one further test of the Teaching; to wit, personal experience.

A farmer in Dakota, in defending his claim, affirmed that under his title the eastern line of his farm was "six hundred paces from the creek to a certain boulder." The jury, being in doubt, asked the magistrate to be permitted to see for themselves; whereupon they visited the farm and paced the eastern line and satisfied themselves in that way. This is precisely the plan proposed for testing the Teaching. "Come and see."

In one of Peter's epistles, he says, "For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eye-witnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there was borne such a voice to him by the Majestic Glory, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; and this voice we ourselves heard borne out of heaven, when we were with him in the holy mount." Thus far we have apostolic testimony. He proceeds, "We have the word of prophecy, made more sure" (the reference here is to the Scriptures of the Old Testament) "whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawn," (here follows the test of experience) "and the Daystar arise in your hearts."

We are like wanderers in the night. Voices are

heard about us, saying, "This is the Way: walk ye in it." Better still the Bible is given "as a lantern shining in a dark place." When we personally experience the saving power of Christ, the light of the morning shines into our faces, and as the day-star is outshone by the sun our perplexity is gone forever. Thus personal experience adds final confirmation to Scripture and oral testimony; and certainty takes the place of hope.

"Oh, taste and see that Jehovah is good!" It is a true saying, "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in him." All voices, human and divine, are ineffective until by vital appropriation we make the gospel an indwelling fact. Then we know that Jesus Christ hath power on earth to forgive sins. Then we, becoming witnesses ourselves, are prepared to testify that his love affords an easement of all pain and sorrow. Then we feel his friendship as the great incentive to spiritual growth and usefulness. The truth is put beyond all doubt or peradventure when "the Daystar arises in our hearts."

Is it not reasonable that a man, assuming him to be unprejudiced, should put the Teaching to this test? We are all alike sensible of sin; and, aside from the Teaching of Christ, there is no way of salvation. We are like that woman in Capernaum who, having an issue of blood which was pronounced to be incurable, and hearing that Jesus was in the city, said within herself, "If I do but touch his garment, I shall be made whole." She

forced her way through the press, touched the hem of his garment and felt that her malady had gone from her. As she was going her way Jesus said, "Who is it that touched me?" And the woman, "trembling, fell down before him and told him all." She told him the pathetic story of her vain consultation with other physicians, on whom she had wasted all her substance, and how in her despair she had come to him. And he said, "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace." Is it not in line with common reason that any one in a similar case should do likewise? If there is no other way of escaping from the record of the mislived past and from the bondage of evil habit, why not come to him whose blood cleanseth from all sin, and whose truth makes men free?

A woman of Samaria, going out to draw water, met and talked with Jesus, who was sitting weary on the curb of the well. She presently left her water-pot and came running into the city, saying to her friends and neighbors, "I went out to draw water at Jacob's well, and there I met a wayfarer who spake to me as never man spake." "Come, see a man who told me all things that ever I did; can this be the Christ?" They followed her back to the well and listened to Jesus. They besought him to be their guest; and he abode there two days, and many believed on him. And they said to the woman, "Now we believe, not because of thy speaking, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world."

Thus, in the last reduction, a man is savingly convinced by personal experience, when he can say, "I have met Christ, have made his acquaintance, have reasoned with him by the way and have learned to love him."

Summing up.—The case is thus presented to our jury of fair-minded men; and, as in similar cases, the call is for decision here and now. The claim of the Teacher as to the truth of the Teaching is true or it is not true. The verdict is called for. Let there be no "hung jury." Proven or not proven? That is the question. If the evidence is conclusive, there is only one thing to do; to wit, Accept Christ and follow him.

We shall have no further evidence bearing upon the truth of the Teaching until we see the Teacher in the brightness of his heavenly glory. The Day-star itself will fade in the brightness of that high noon. Here we see as in a glass darkly, but there we shall see face to face. We shall behold the King in his beauty, and "we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

A native convert in the South Sea Islands gave this testimony: "I listened to the missionary when he spoke of sin, and he and I were like two canoes going side by side. Then he spoke of the way of salvation, and I dropped behind—mast broken and sail blown away—while he sped on. The sea drove me on a barren coast, where I lay helpless for a time. Then I arose in the blackness of darkness,

and felt my way like one groping along the wall. At length I seemed to touch a door; I pushed for my life; it flew open, and I beheld Him with the glory shining in His face!"

The evidence as to the Teaching is before us. Let us use the light we have and live up to it. Let us follow the gleam of the Scriptures, listen to the voices of eye-witnesses and heed the testimony of our own hearts. Here is the secret of peace and moral earnestness. And in due time the shadows will flee away and our path will be as the shining light which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

HIS SOCIAL ETHICS

The law of Christ.—A complex law.—Kinship in the law.—The new note.—Sharing with Christ.—Christ under the yoke.—A law for all men.

The "law of Christ" as laid down by Paul is usually regarded as identical with the Golden Rule, which James called "the royal law," saying, "If ye fulfill the royal law, according to the Scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well." But they are not identical, as we shall see.

Here is Paul's code as given in Galatians 6: 2-5:

"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

"For if a man thinketh himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.

"But let each man prove his own work, and then shall he have his glorying in regard of himself alone and not of his neighbor.

"For each man shall bear his own burden."

The advice of Paul on this occasion was called forth by a controversy which was going on in the Galatian churches. The question at issue was about the laws binding on them as followers of Christ. Some said that the Moral Law as set forth in the Ten Commandments was enough; but there were others who insisted that as Christians they were

still under the Law of Ordinances; that the rites and ceremonies prescribed under the Levitical economy were as imperious as ever. To all alike the apostle says, "If you want laws, here is one that shall suffice for all; to wit, the Law of Christ, 'Bear ye one another's burdens,' That will keep you busy, if you suitably observe it."

A complex law.—At first glance the law thus enunciated looks simple enough; but scarcely has Paul uttered it before he gives us to understand that it is really a most complex and comprehensive scheme of life.

The first sign of this complexity appears in the paradoxical statement that "*Each man shall bear his own burden.*"

This is the law of nature. Every man must bear his own burden because he cannot help it. He is born alone and must endure for himself the ills that human flesh is heir to. He suffers the lonely aches and pains of childhood and, farther on, must meet his foes single handed and weep his own bitter tears. At last he passes alone through the little wicket gate and stands to answer for himself alone at the judgment bar of God.

I dreamed a dream, long years ago, in which I seemed to be in a shadowy world where ghostly figures were passing before me; and all bore burdens. Some tried to walk erect and manfully bear up, while others groaned and bowed low; but all alike were burden-bearers. It was a true vision.

This is the common lot. The only question is, How shall we bear up?

There are those who face the inevitable with stoical fortitude, like an Indian bound to the stake, who smiles while the flames curl about him. Others suffer submissively, because "what can't be cured must be endured" or because they believe in Providence and can say, "It is the Lord; he doeth all things well." But there are others still who carry their burden with Christian faith, like Paul, who cried, "We rejoice in our tribulations; knowing that tribulation worketh steadfastness; and steadfastness, approvedness; and approvedness, hope: and hope putteth not to shame; because the love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit which was given unto us."

Kinship in the law.—The next item in the analysis of this law is in the words, "*Bear ye one another's burdens.*"

This is the law of society. A pot-hunter in pursuit of game carries his own gun, because there is no one to carry it for him. To all intents and purposes he is a barbarian; the rule of his business being "Look out for number one."

But suppose that same man is enlisted in a company keeping step along a hot and dusty road. Borne down by the heat and burden of the day, he reels and staggers. A voice beside him cries, "You are faint, comrade! Give me your gun and your knapsack; I'll carry them for you." That is sym-

pathy, the fruit of fellowship and the noblest thing in human nature. It is only when men draw near to each other in social bonds that voices are heard calling, "Lend a hand!"

And just here we note one of the clear distinctions between man and the lower orders of life. How much better is a man than a horse? If two horses be harnessed together it is only because they will carry a heavier load that way. If one falls in the traces his mate casts no eye of sympathy upon him, but stolidly trudges on. But if two men be yoked together it is not simply by reason of the fact that they can thus carry a heavier burden, but that they can carry it more easily because of sympathy: as it is written, "Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow."

The ground of this social law is in the fact that we are "made of one blood." The word "kindness," in its primitive form, is *kinned-ness*. We are all kinsfolk; because we are children of the same God.

And here lies the foundation of Government. The ancient symbol of Government was a lame man carried on the shoulders of a blind man, one being legs to the other and the other eyes to him. Barbarism says, "I care for nobody, no, not I, and nobody cares for me." Civilization says, "I care for everybody, and I expect everybody to care for me." The most visible sign of Government is taxation; because it represents the interdependency of the

units in a commonwealth. The wards of society must be protected and cared for; the wealth of the self-supporting must be taxed for the support of the weak. In other words, every man is responsible for the other man.

The new note.—The third element in the analysis of the Law under consideration is this: *The bearing of the other man's burden is a normal part of my own burden.*

And this is the Law of Christ. He said, "A new commandment I give unto you; that ye love one another even as I have loved you." In what sense can this be called a new commandment? He had already summarized the whole moral law in two precepts, namely: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment. And the second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." The old commandment is, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself"; but a distinct advance is made by Christ when he says to his disciples, "Ye shall love one another even as I have loved you."

How did Jesus love them? Did he love them as he loved himself? No, he never thought of himself, in his consuming love for them. His spirit was one of utter self-forgetfulness, self-abnegation, self-sacrifice. There was only one man in the world whom Christ ever forgot, and that was Jesus of Nazareth. He remembered all others

and loved them so utterly that he gave himself for them. Wherefore those who follow Christ are under bonds to love others more than they love themselves.

Sacrifice is the keynote of the Christian life. Sacrifice is sanguinary; the redness of blood is upon it. He who would fulfill the royal law of Christ must therefore bear the other man's burden until he feels it. He must "give until it hurts"; he must love until he bleeds; he must present himself "a living sacrifice," for Jesus' sake, in the behalf of his fellow-men. This is the meaning of the Master's words, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me."

Sharing with Christ.—The fourth of the constituent elements in this Law may be expressed on this wise: *He who thus bears the burden of others, bears a part of the burden of Christ.*

This is the law of the Church as laid down by Christ. It is set forth in that singular statement of Paul's where he says, writing from a prison where he languished in bonds and affliction, "I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake and fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the Church; whereof I was made a minister according to the dispensation of God."

But what is that which is "lacking of the sufferings of Christ"? Did he not suffer all, and once for all? Is not redemption fully accomplished by

the tragedy of the Cross? What then can be "lacking" for us to fill up?

It is true that the Cross stands for a full and complete expiation of human sin. No mortal man can help Christ to bear his cross. He nowhere asks it. He does not say, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, take up my cross and follow me"; but "Let him take up his cross." We cannot enter into partnership with him in his vicarious pain. We cannot bear the slightest part of it. On his way to Calvary he paused at the Garden of Gethsemane and, as he entered the shadow of the olive trees, said to his chosen disciples, "Sit ye here, while I go yonder"; and he passed "yonder" into the darker shadow, where all alone he pressed the purple cup of death to his lips; as it had been written of him, "I have trodden the winepress alone and of the peoples there was no man with me." And at the conclusion of the three hours of mortal anguish on the cross he cried, "It is finished!" so signifying that nothing remains to be done for the expiation of the world's sin.

But there is still somewhat "lacking" of the sufferings of Christ for us to fulfill. There is work to be done in which we can co-operate with him. It is nineteen hundred years since he tasted death for every man, and there are still twelve hundred millions of people who have either never heard of the gospel or care nothing about it. The burden of the unsaved multitude is still upon the heart of

Christ; and it is for us to help him bear it. That which is "lacking" is the bringing of the world to God. Did he weep, saying, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her! how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not"? "Did Christ o'er sinners weep and shall our tears be dry?" Hear his word: "Go out into the highways and hedges and constrain them to come in!"

And this is his yoke. He bears his cross alone, but his yoke he shares with us. "Take my yoke upon you," he says: "Help me to carry the burden of a sin-stricken world back to truth and righteousness! Lend a hand in the reaping of the yellow harvest of souls! My yoke is your yoke: I leave it behind that ye may carry it with me." This is the work of the Church; and this is the work of every true Christian who is a member of it. Oh, how much remains of the work of the Master for us to do!

Christ under the Yoke.—And there is a fifth fact which must be taken into consideration in our analysis of this law, to wit: *The yoke is easy and the burden is light.*

The yoke is easy because it is always for two. The burden is light because he helps us carry it. If ever it seems heavy let me remember that just

beside me, under the other half of my yoke, is my Lord. I never toil alone; it is always Christ and I.

A farmer driving home from market overtook a weary traveler with a pack on his shoulders, bowing under the heat and burden of the day. "Will you give me a lift?" said the weary man. The farmer assented and the traveler climbed in behind him. As he drove on, chancing to look behind him, he saw that the traveler's burden was still on his back. "Why don't you lay it down and rest?" asked he. "It is enough," replied the foolish man, "that you should carry me without carrying my burden, too."

And thus we journey heavenward, making our yoke hard and our burden heavy, because we forget that for Christ to carry us is no easier than to carry our burden with us. Unload, my friend, and learn the comfort of perfect trust. Get so far into accord with the Spirit of Christ that you shall be able to sing:

"How gentle God's commands,
How kind his precepts are!
Come, cast your burdens on the Lord
And trust his constant care.

"His goodness stands approved,
Unchanged from day to day;
I'll drop my burden at his feet
And bear a song away."

A law for all men.—So runs the blessed Law of Christ. It was intended for all; not for Christians only, but for everybody in this world of ours. It was designed to be as comprehensive as the law of gravity which so prevails in the natural universe that the rolling sun and the planets and every particle of matter are under its sway. But the Law of Christ, unlike the law of gravity, was made for men and women created in the likeness of a sovereign God and therefore with sovereign wills that can challenge the Law and disobey it. For this reason you and I must each for himself determine whether he will come under its control or not.

But for those who profess to follow Christ there is no option in these premises. We are in covenant bonds; and this is the very touchstone of discipleship. It is a well-known fact that the presence of certain metals can be determined by the various colors which they emit. The Christian life is in like manner attested by obedience to the Law of Christ, as he said: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

And here is also the secret of a happy Christian life. Our Lord, when he entered upon his earthly ministry, came joyously under the control of this royal law; as it is written, "Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." In like manner the Chris-

tian who yields himself with a cordial abandon to the sway of this Law finds the true happiness of life here and an abundant entrance into the life eternal. Wherefore, let the mind that was in Christ Jesus be also in you.

He who thus follows Christ is no longer an alien from the commonwealth of Israel and a stranger to the covenants of promise, but is become an enfranchised citizen of the kingdom of God.

HIS SACERDOTAL PRAYER

Christ in prayer.—The prayer of the upper room.—That his disciples may be kept.—Sanctified.—Unified.—Glorified.—A limited prayer.—All may be included.

Christ in prayer.—No man ever prayed as Jesus did. He was in such vital communion with the Father that prayer was, as we say, “second nature” to him. Nay, rather it was first nature to him. He knew how to commune with God.

On one occasion, being overheard by his disciples who perceived that he was possessed of a secret unknown to them, they said “Lord, teach us to pray.” His answer was, “After this manner pray ye: Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.”

We are accustomed to speak of this as “the Lord’s prayer.” It was, however, not the Lord’s prayer at all but our prayer. It was indeed a prayer in which he himself could scarcely join; because his relation with the Father was quite different from ours. He nowhere includes himself

in the same sort of filiation as ours, since he was "the only-begotten Son." The real Lord's Prayer is that which is recorded in the seventeenth chapter of John. This is a prayer which none but he could make; which no mortal man could offer without such a measure of presumption as would amount to blasphemy against God.

The prayer of the upper room.—It is to this sacerdotal prayer that our thought is now directed: "These things spake Jesus, and lifting up his eyes to heaven, he said, Father, the hour is come."

It was the last night of his sojourn on earth. He was meeting with his disciples for the last time in the upper room. He had preached his last sermon to them; had instituted the last supper; had given them his last bequest, saying, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you": and now he makes his last prayer for them.

"I pray not for the world," he says, "but for those whom thou hast given me." And then he proceeds to ask four things in their behalf; and in our behalf, also, for he distinctly makes mention of "them also that believe on me through their word." Thus his great prayer includes all true Christians to the end of time. In these four petitions we have a summary of all that makes life worth living or heaven worth longing for.

That his disciples may be kept.—"Holy Father," he prays, "keep them in thy name which thou hast

given me. . . . I pray not that thou shouldest take them from the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil one."

He had himself been sent into the world to accomplish a definite task, and he was not to depart out of the world until he could say, "I have accomplished the work which thou hast given me to do." As the Father had sent him into the world, so had he sent his disciples into the very thick of its toil and conflict to remain there until their work was accomplished. In the meantime he said, "Whither I go ye cannot come;" but in due time, having been faithful, they were to follow him.

He foresaw the trials and persecutions that awaited them. The sword was being sharpened; the fagots were being kindled for them; he heard the roaring of the lions in the amphitheatre. In that company in the upper room was James, who was presently to be slain with the sword; and most of the others, if not all, were destined to climb "the steep ascent of heaven through peril, toil and pain." He did not pray that they might be kept alive. For life is not worth living when faith and honor die. His desire was that they might be kept faithful unto death.

He foresaw also the divers temptations that awaited them; temptations to turn aside from the straight path of righteousness into the by-ways of sin: temptations to swerve from their loyalty to truth into the easy follies of unbelief. For false teachers were to "creep in" among them, whose

clever presentations of error were calculated to deceive the very elect. He did not pray that they might not be exposed to these temptations; but that, being so exposed, they might be kept from wandering into sin and unbelief.

Oh, how much this prayer of the Master is needed to-day! We are living in a very cyclone of controversy, and in constant danger of being swept away from our moorings by adverse winds. There is not a single fundamental truth of the gospel which is not denied or speciously explained away in these days—the deity of Jesus, the inspiration of the Scriptures, the reality of the supernatural, the very personality of God!

The two pieces of divine armor which we most need, under these circumstances, are the girdle of truth and the sandals of the gospel. It was the spiked sandals of a Roman knight that, at close quarters with his adversary, enabled him “to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand.”

But the doctrine of the “perseverance of the saints” rests on no frail foundation of human ability. We are saved not by our feeble hold on Christ but by his mighty grip on us, as he said, “No one shall snatch them out of my hand.” Wherefore let us lean hard and trust to his great promise:

“The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose
I will not, I will not desert to his foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I’ll never, no, never, no, never forsake!”

Sanctified.—The second petition of this great prayer in behalf of his disciples is that they may be sanctified.

The word sanctification is used in two different senses. It refers, on the one hand, to growth in holiness. We as Christians are expected to grow every day; not to stand still, marking time, but “to act that each to-morrow find us farther than to-day.” We are to add to our faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity, that so we may increase in the practical knowledge of Christ.

This is character building: to be constantly growing more like him. And to that end we have received the immediate presence and power of the Holy Ghost, the Sanctifier. He is not called the Holy Ghost because he is holier than either of the other persons of the Godhead, but because it is his official function to impart and cultivate holiness. Wherefore our sanctification is measured by our close and vital acquaintance with him.

But sanctification means also consecration; that is, devotion to duty. So Jesus says, “For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth;” by which he means that he sets before them an example of perfect devotion to duty. And he indicates how this is to be accomplished in us. The agent of sanctification,

in both senses, is the Holy Spirit, and the instrument used by him is the "truth."

We are left in no doubt as to where this truth is to be found; for Jesus adds "Thy Word is truth." His reference is clearly to the Scriptures. I am aware that an attempt is made by those who reject the Scriptures to explain this away by saying he was thinking of all the manifestations of Deity in the world about us. But here "the wish is father to the thought." The reference of Jesus is not to God's voice in the rolling thunder and the rippling of brooks, but to his revealed Word. And this is in line with all his other teachings. He was always true to his Bible; he knew it, believed it, loved it, preached it and commended it to those who followed him. He never in a single word or syllable intimated that he questioned its inspiration and trustworthiness. It is respectfully submitted to the consideration of all his professed followers that the Book which was good enough for him should be good enough for us.

The pathway of sanctification is thus made clear. If we profess to follow Christ, we must allow him to prescribe for us. He breathed on his disciples, saying, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit"; he pointed to the Scriptures, saying, "They testify of me." We have the Bible; and we have the Holy Spirit to illuminate its pages and anoint our eyes that we may see; furthermore, we have the sustaining power of this great prayer of Jesus, "Sanctify them in the truth."

Unified.—His third petition for his disciples is that they may be unified: "That they may all be one, even as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be in us."

It is a grave misinterpretation and perversion of this prayer to suggest that Jesus had in mind a heterogeneous union of all sorts of people, like the "Congress of Religions" where Jews and Christians, Moslems, Confucianists, Buddhists and Fire-worshippers met together in a common fellowship under the apparent assumption that sincerity in error is as admirable as devotion to truth. The prayer of Jesus, on the contrary, was for the harmonious unity of all who sincerely believe in him.

Nor did he pray that these might all be one in an unconditioned oneness, but that they might be one after the similitude of the ineffable Trinity. "As thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be in us."

The union thus indicated is obviously not a matter of mere sentiment nor to be accomplished with iron clamps. It is a union of life and purpose, a substantial union, a union for the accomplishment of a definite purpose in the salvation of men.

We sometimes lament the fact that there are different denominations of believers in Christ. This is after the analogy of Nature. "Birds of a feather flock together"; and there are "many men of many minds." We are made to segregate; and it matters not how we differ in non-essentials so long as there is a substantial unity of life and purpose among us.

At the beginning of our Civil War there was a call for seventy-five thousand troops to serve for ninety days. The troops thus enlisted were organized into companies, regiments, divisions and army corps. There were infantry and cavalry and artillery. Had they been massed and hurled at once with a common purpose against the enemy, the war might have been brought to a speedy close; but they were stationed all over the country in various camps.

Then came years of sporadic fighting: till at length Grant appeared with a conviction that the whole army must be brought together for a final blow. He meant to save the Union; and there seemed no other way. So the order went out and a million men turned their faces toward a single point. All the lines converged at Appomattox. Grant was there with his formidable army; Sheridan was hastening from the North and Sherman from the South. The result was a foregone conclusion when the lines closed in.

It was with a like purpose in mind that Jesus prayed for the unification of his Church, "that the world may know that thou didst send me." The sending of Christ was for the saving of the world; and the sending of his disciples was to the same end; that is, to bring all men to the knowledge of the saving grace of God. "As thou didst send me into the world," he said, "even so send I them into the world." And never will the world believe in the great purpose of Jesus until all his disciples,

moved by a common impulse, shall advance in solid phalanx to proclaim his gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth.

"The way to resume," said Jay Cooke, "is to resume." The way to get together is to stop talking about Church union and turn our faces toward the common end. Such a union would be immeasurably better, more rational and more convincing than any uniformity brought about by sentimental exhortations or by mere mechanical means. The world will believe in the gospel just as soon as Christians demonstrate their conviction of its truth by being "all at it, always at it, all together at it."

Glorified.—The fourth of the great petitions of Jesus for his disciples is that they may be glorified: "Father, I will ¹ that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me." And here we reach the stupendous climax of this mighty sacerdotal prayer. The words of Jesus at this point are conclusive with respect to two matters.

On the one hand, they prove that Jesus was either what he claimed to be, to wit; the only-begotten and co-equal Son of God, or else he was

¹ In the Revised Version this is rendered, "Father, I desire," etc.; but, inasmuch as the word *thelein* occurs ninety-seven times in the four Gospels and always with this meaning, I see no reason for changing it.

justly charged with blasphemy against God. For, observe, he does not ask this thing of the Father, but wills it! Out of his own authority, the *exousia* which was "from within," he wills it! As the eternal Son he wills it! Think of a mere man, though he were the best of men, looking up to heaven and speaking in this way.

And observe also his reference to "the glory which he had with the Father before the world was." He claims not only to have been pre-existent but to be a sempiternal sharer in the glory of God! He elsewhere announced his purpose of returning, after he should have finished his redemptive work, to reassume the glory which he had with the Father "before the world was"!

But his words suggest another important truth, to wit: that his intercessory prayer on this occasion was but the beginning of an eternal intercession in behalf of those who follow him. "He ever liveth to make intercession for us." In that same interview with his disciples in the upper room he said, "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again and will receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." He is thus preparing us for a prepared place. He has entered upon his glory, and proposes that his faithful followers shall not only behold but participate in it.

On one occasion his disciples caught a glimpse of that glory. It was on the Mount of Transfiguration, where "the fashion of his countenance was

altered and his raiment became white and dazzling." For a moment his homespun fluttered aside and revealed the King; but how, think you, will he appear when we shall see him as he is? Here is something to dream about. Surely a great surprise awaits us!

How natural it was, and how human, that Jesus should offer this prayer! The disciples had known him in his humiliation; he meant that they should behold him in his glory. They had seen him clothed in homespun; he wanted them to see him arrayed in light and dwelling in glory unapproachable. They had seen him in the workshop, with chips and shavings about his feet and the implements of his trade on the bench before him; he wanted them to see him in the palace where he had dwelt "before the world was." They had seen him on his weary journeys followed by a meager retinue of fishermen; he wanted them to see him with legions of angels and archangels waiting to do his holy will. They were to see him in the Judgment Hall, scourged and spit upon, wearing the cast-off purple of a petty magistrate, with an impotent reed in his hand; he wanted them to see him surrounded by a great multitude that no man can number, ascribing to him, with a voice like the sound of many waters, honor and glory and power and dominion forever and ever. They were to see him lifted up in the mortal anguish of the cross; he wanted them to see him lifted up above all principalities and powers, as King of kings and Lord of lords.

A limited prayer.—One thing more, and here is a matter for serious consideration. This prayer of Jesus was only for those who love and follow him. "I pray not for the world," he said, "but for those whom thou hast given me."

On other occasions he did pray for the world. His advent was a demonstration of his love toward all the children of men. His life was a long prayer for sinners. His death was a mighty prayer for salvation to the uttermost. It had been written of him, centuries before: "Ask of me, and I will give thee the nations for thine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession."

On the cross, with his pierced hands outstretched, he offered that petition, "Give me the nations for my inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for my possession!" This was a plea for all humanity; which in the fullness of time shall be answered when the nations shall come flocking to him as doves to their windows, and he shall see the fruit of the travail of his soul and be satisfied.

Oh, yes; he prayed for the world! He prayed for all non-believers to the end of time when he cried, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!" But on this occasion, in the upper room, his prayer was only in behalf of those who loved him.

All may be included.—If there be any man, not hitherto a Christian, who would come within the

charmed circle of this intercessory prayer—surely a great privilege—the way is open before him. Yield to the overtures of Christ. Bow under his cross and pass under his yoke. There is no other way of getting into this inner place. He offers salvation to the worst of sinners; but, inasmuch as man was created in the likeness of God and is therefore possessed of a sovereign will, salvation cannot be forced upon him. The unspeakable gifts of the gospel are free as air or water, but a man must take them.

Oh, the blessedness of being included in the intercessory prayer of Christ! It makes us strong and patient and hopeful in suffering and service to know that he ever liveth to make intercession for us.

Arise, my soul, arise:
Shake off thy guilty fears!
The bleeding Sacrifice
In thy behalf appears;
Before the throne my Surety stands,
My name is written on his hands!

He ever lives above
For me to intercede;
His all-redeeming love,
His precious blood to plead;
His blood atoned for all our race
And sprinkles now the throne of grace.

Five bleeding wounds he bears,
Received on Calvary;

They pour effectual prayers,
They strongly plead for me.
"Forgive him, O forgive," they cry,
"Nor let that ransomed sinner die!"

The Father hears him pray,
His dear anointed One;
He cannot turn away
The presence of his Son;
The Spirit answers to the blood
And tells me I am born of God!

All thanks to him who thus remembers us! In our behalf the incense of intercession ever rises from the Golden Altar of heaven. Our Lord stands, as Stephen saw him, with outstretched arms to welcome us. We are kept, we are sanctified, we are brought into the fellowship of saints, and shall be ultimately glorified with Christ, because he ever liveth, thus, to make intercession for us.

HIS GREAT PROMISE

Necessary that Christ should depart.—His bequest.—
Personality of the Holy Spirit.—The convicting
power of the Spirit.—We need him.

Necessary that Christ should depart.—It is easy to understand the necessity of Christ's coming into this world; for what a dreary, sunless world it would have been without him! It is easy to see, moreover, that it was expedient for him to remain here, in order to teach truth and righteousness and lay the foundations of his Kingdom among men. But how could it be expedient that he should go away? Yet he says plainly in the sixteenth chapter of John: "I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away."

Was it on account of the limitations of the flesh? His purpose was to be a universal Saviour; his gospel was for all the children of men; yet here he was, "cabin'd, cribbed, confined" in the smallest of small parishes in a remote corner of the world. The problem before him was like that of Archimedes, who affirmed that he could lift the world if only he might find a place for the fulcrum of his lever. But obviously the place for the fulcrum of a lever that lifts the world must be outside of it.

The great men of history have all had to "go away" in order to wield the full measure of their influence. The living among us are the dead. The men who are dominating our affairs are not those who have the trumpet at their lips, but those who have gone into God's acre, many of them lying in unknown graves "unwept, unhonored and unsung."

The influence of Jesus, while he sojourned as a man among men, was inconsiderable as compared with that which he exerted afterward. He succeeded in gathering a little group of fishermen and other humble folk about him; and that, apparently, was all. His announced plan was to revolutionize history and turn the world upside down; and this meager following was all there was to show for it!

All bodily presence is weak. It seemed impossible for Jesus even to impress upon his disciples an adequate thought of his divine nature and authority so long as they were able to say, "Behold he is with us and one of us." One night while they were rowing across the sea of Galilee the storm fell suddenly and they were overwhelmed with fear. What was their Master's power to them? Yet he was only three miles away!

So sensuous was their faith that it reached only to their finger-tips. For their sake, therefore, as well as for the world's sake, he must vanish out of their sight; like Lycurgus, who, having prepared a code of laws for Sparta, and perceiving that his personal presence was a hindrance to the just ob-

servance of that code, mysteriously disappeared and never again was seen among men. But he left his influence behind him. It was because he found the fulcrum of his lever outside the world that his name is mentioned among the great lawgivers of the world to-day.

His bequest.—But Christ has nothing to say of such considerations as these. The reason which he gives for his going away is that he was to leave behind him a bequest which should be a manifold equivalent for every loss. “If I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go I will send him unto you.”

In the history of our world there have been three divine dispensations. The first was the dispensation of the Father, which continued from the creation until the advent of Christ, a period of about four thousand years. The second was the dispensation of the Son, which continued for a brief period of about thirty years; it was like a sun spot on the mountains, which lingers for a moment and is gone. The third is the dispensation of the Spirit, in which we are living to-day. At the ascension of Christ the work of the kingdom on earth was transferred to the Holy Spirit; and he, as its executive, will carry it on until the restitution of all things.

So Jesus said farewell and went his way. What then? For a time his followers were overwhelmed with sorrow, feeling that all was over.

But after his resurrection Christ reappeared and remained with his disciples forty days, long enough to satisfy them that whereas he had died he was now alive forevermore, and to mark out for them the plan of the campaign which was to eventuate in the restoration of the world to God. At the close of that period he met them at Olivet, breathed on them, saying, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit!" and gave them the great commission, "Go, evangelize!" Then the heavens opened to receive him.

Ten days later, while the disciples were praying in an open court in Jerusalem, the Spirit came with a sound as of a rushing, mighty wind; and the beginning of the new administration was signalized by the conversion of three thousand souls in a single day!

Personality of the Holy Spirit.—We are living in this dispensation of the Spirit; and it is obviously of the utmost importance that we should understand the meaning of it. The Holy Spirit is not an impersonal something or other, an affluence, an effluence, an influence or anything of the sort. He is the third person of the Godhead. His personality is as real as that of the Father or that of the Son. He is the Executive of this dispensation, under whose authority and control we, as followers of Christ, meet all responsibilities and discharge all duties.

It is nearly nineteen hundred years since Jesus

advised his disciples that they were to act henceforth under this direction; and think of the millions on millions of people in the world who have never heard his gospel! Nor can the Church expect to realize its best possibilities so long as its ministers and members fail to recognize the leadership of the Spirit, and the fact that they themselves, in order to meet their responsibilities under the great commission, must be baptized with fire and power and made conscious partners in the transcendent work of the Spirit of God.

The convicting power of the Spirit.—The influence of the Holy Ghost, as the great dynamic in human history, is here clearly indicated in the teaching of Christ. He says of the Comforter, "When he is come he will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness and of judgment."

Of sin.—He will convict the world of sin, "because they believe not on me."

The average man has a totally inadequate sense of sin. At the best, he regards it as a violation of law. He sees clearly enough that theft, arson, forgery, murder and adultery are sins. In fact, however, they are merely symptoms of sin, like eruptions which indicate an inward malady. And when we try to cure sin with chains and prisons and scaffold trees, we are simply doctoring the visible symptoms of it.

But here comes the Holy Ghost to correct this

misapprehension. He teaches us that sin in any form whatsoever is not only a violation of law, divine or human, but enmity against God.

This is getting down to the root of the matter. The thief, the drunkard and the drab are sinners, certainly; any child knows that. But how about the smug, decorous, respectable malefactor who does not wear his vices on his sleeve for daws to peck at? What about the man who keeps within the bounds of statutes and ordinances but has no place in his life for God? Is he also a sinner? The Holy Ghost says yes. Why? Because he breathes God's air, lives on his bounty, is a constant beneficiary of his goodness and yet has not the grace to say, "I thank you!"

If this were all it would be bad enough; but the head and front of his offending is that when God sends his only-begotten Son into the world to die for his redemption, he will have none of him! So said Peter to the assembled multitudes on the day of Pentecost, "Jesus of Nazareth . . . him . . . ye by the hands of lawless men did crucify and slay." They were guilty of a thousand sins; but this was the greatest of all.

To reject Christ is to crucify him afresh; and what a sin have we here in the light of this gospel age! This is the revolt of the sinner against God. It is worse than theft and murder and adultery rolled into one. But tell that to the respectable sinner and he will smile at you. The Holy Ghost must come and uncover his heart. And when the

Holy Ghost speaks his words shall be like a two-edged sword which divideth asunder the soul and spirit. Now see the sinner pricked to the heart, and hear him crying, "What shall I do?"

Of righteousness.—It is the function of the Holy Ghost, as Jesus says, to "convict the world of righteousness, because I go to the Father and ye behold me no more."

The world's idea of righteousness is as defective as its conception of sin. It has one form of righteousness which it calls morality, that is, living within the prescript of the law. This is good as far as it goes, but it does not go far enough. Jesus said to the young ruler, "He that doeth the law shall live by it"; but suppose a man breaks the law, what then? "The soul that sinneth it shall die!" And in all the world there is not a mortal man who has kept the moral law.

There is another form of righteousness which means obedience to ceremonial law. This is superficial at the best, and those who practise it, unless they have a heart of holiness, are but "like unto whited sepulchres, which outwardly appear beautiful, but inwardly are full of dead men's bones and of all uncleanness." This is that form of religion of which the Saviour said, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of heaven." The two forms of goodness here indicated are like the signs on a shop-keeper's windows, which may mean something

or nothing, according as there are corresponding goods on his shelves within. And those who trust in either one of them will be left lamenting at the last, "All our righteousnesses are as a polluted garment!"

The Holy Ghost comes to correct these definitions of righteousness by pointing to Christ, who was the only righteous man that ever lived in this world of ours. He was the only one who ever lived up to the high level of the law. He was the only one who ever "brought the bottom of his life up to the top of his light." He was the only one who ever dared to issue a challenge, "Which of you convicteth me of sin?" without being laughed at. He was the *Dikaïos* of whom Plato dreamed, "the perfect one." He was the only man who ever was sentenced to death by a judge who said, "I find no fault in this man."

It is the special and particular function of the Holy Ghost to call him to our remembrance. Christ has gone to the Father, so that the world seeth him no more; but the world can never forget him, because the Holy Ghost is ever pointing to him and saying, "Behold the man! Behold his sinlessness and the perfect manner of his life! Behold him, and be like him!" In the imitation of Christ we find the Spirit's definition of righteousness. For such righteousness is more than conformity with law; it is conformity with God.

So the Holy Ghost reverses the world's conceptions of sin and righteousness. Here are two men

going up to the Temple to pray. One of them is a Doctor of Divinity with broad phylacteries and a scriptural frontlet between his eyes; and his prayer runs on this wise: "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are; extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week! I give tithes of all that I get!" The other, standing afar off, dares not lift up his eyes unto heaven, but, smiting upon his breast, cries, "God, be thou merciful to me, a sinner!" The world takes these men at their own valuation: the Pharisee is a saint and the publican a reprobate. But the Holy Ghost has this to say: "The Pharisee is the sinner and the publican is the saint; because, feeling his sin, he is on his way back to God."

Of judgment.—The Holy Ghost "convicts the world of judgment because the prince of the world hath been judged."

The current thought of judgment is as inadequate as the conceptions of sin and righteousness already referred to. On the one hand there are those who think, like Job's miserable comforters, that judgment is a system of exact retribution going on here and now. A man sits in a draught and contracts rheumatism, or he overeats and has dyspepsia. Thus the laws of nature are continually exacting their *quid pro quo* as indicated in the Buddhist "law of consequences."

There are others who restrict the thought of judgment to the Great Day when all that are in their graves shall come forth to render an account

of their deeds. Both of these conceptions are true so far as they go; but they do not exhaust the matter in hand.

The Holy Spirit comes to advise us that there is another sort of judgment going on every day before our eyes. Who is being judged? The prince of this world. We are in the midst of a great controversy. Light and darkness are met as on a mighty battlefield. Events are hastening on toward a great Armageddon when the red dragon shall be cast into the pit. Here is the key to history. Read it as Christ did when he said, "I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven!" Read judgment in the newspapers, between the lines of passing events! The Holy Spirit gives us the clue. "God's in his heaven, all's right with the world!"

History is judgment. There is judgment in the story of Waterloo and Gettysburg, the Crusades and the Reformation, the fall of the Bastille and the signing of Magna Charta. Christ goeth forth conquering and to conquer! He hath upon his vesture and upon his thigh a name written, "King of Kings and Lord of Lords." See the white plume of the Captain of our Salvation in the forefront of events, leading onward, ever onward to the Golden Age! Fall in and lend a hand! The blast of the trumpet which shall usher in the Great Day will be but the signal for the final sitting of a Court which has been in session through all the ages.

So the three great facts in the province of the spiritual life, to wit: sin, righteousness and judgment, are defined and opened up to us by the Holy Spirit. He anoints our eyes that we may see. He dispels doubt, cures hypochondria and makes optimists of all. He hushes our misereres and attunes our hearts to hosannas and hallelujahs. The shadows disappear at his bidding and lo, the mountains are full of horses and chariots!

We need him.—Come, Holy Spirit, come! Come as the light to illumine our dull understandings! Come as the morning dew to refresh our weary energies and give us hopeful and joyous views of spiritual truth! Come as the fire to enkindle within us new zeal for holiness and new devotion to the kingdom of truth and righteousness! Come and call Jesus to our remembrance! For without thee our eyes grow dim and vision fails. Show us Christ, crucified to atone for sin which is enmity against God! Show us Christ, the living exemplar of that righteousness which is conformity with God! Show us Christ, the conqueror who leads the great campaign of progress with such might that the gates of hell cannot prevail against him! Come, Holy Spirit, come! Give us a bright vision of Christ, the Alpha and Omega, the beginning of every high hope and noble aspiration, and the end of every ambition that is worthy of the children of men! Show us Christ, first, last, midst and all-in-all!

HIS ATONING WORK

**An object lesson.—The doctrine of salvation.—Sin.—
Expiation.—Justification by faith.**

An object lesson.—The clearest exposition of the Atonement is that which Christ himself gave in his conversation with Nicodemus. The rabbi had greeted him with a compliment, "Master, we know that thou art a teacher come from God." This was a mere courtesy on his part; but back of it, deep down in his heart, was a strong desire to know the way of eternal life.

As an expert in the art of forensic dissimulation he naturally gave no outward token of this desire; but the Lord perceived it. He diagnosed his case at a glance; and giving no heed to the compliment, he proceeded straightway to the matter in hand. He knew that what his visitor wanted was light on the great problem of salvation; and he instructed him precisely as if he had been a little child. If a kindergartner wishes to explain roundness to a child he does not give the dictionary definition but holds up an orange to illustrate it. So Christ gives Nicodemus an object lesson, to make clear the doctrine of salvation. "Do you remember," he says, "how Moses lifted up the serpent in the

wilderness?" Of course he remembered; for this was an old story and the Hebrew people were all familiar with it.

The doctrine of salvation.—Our Lord used this incident to illustrate the doctrine of salvation; and the analogy is very close. In this doctrine there are three essential facts.

Sin.—The first fact is sin. Here is the starting-point. We shall make no progress toward a solution of the problem until we get a right idea of sin. I am aware that this way of thinking is quite out of fashion; nevertheless sin is a fact; and there is none to dispute it.

Sin, like the venom of the serpent, is all-pervasive. It courses through the blood from the heart to the very finger-tips. It corrupts the mind, perverts the conscience, enfeebles the will, so that "the whole head is sick and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it: but wounds and bruises and fresh stripes."

Sin, like the venom of the serpent, is deadly. "The soul that sinneth it shall die." And to the mind of a right-thinking man there can be no death more frightful than eternal exile from a holy God. There is no cure in our *materia medica* for it. In vain did the Israelites search for an antidote for the serpent's bite. Their herbs and nostrums and incantations were unavailing. The

world, in like manner, has been groping through the centuries for some remedy for sin. The problem is, What shall I do to be saved? How shall God be just and yet the justifier of the ungodly? How shall a man be just with God? In all the mythologies and philosophies and false religions of the world there is no hint or suggestion of any method for the removal of sin.

Expiation.—The second of the essential facts in the doctrine of salvation is expiation. This is set forth in the lifting up of the serpent. Jesus said, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up." The resemblance is clear.

To begin with, the brazen effigy on the pole was really no serpent at all. It was wholly innocuous. There was no venom in it. So it is written of Christ that he was "holy, harmless and undefiled" among the sinful children of men. There was no fault in him at all.

But the brazen effigy was *like* a serpent. So it is written, "God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the ordinance of the law might be fulfilled in us." And, still more emphatically, "Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God."

As the brazen serpent was impaled, "*even so* must the Son of Man be lifted up." The phrase "lifted up" was generally understood as a proverb-

ial reference to crucifixion. "But this he said, signifying by what manner of death he should die." A further explanation is given in these words: "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."

As the brazen effigy, like a madstone, drew the poison from the wound, so Christ crucified has power to save. This is because he died as our substitute. Our sin is laid by imputation upon him, that he in turn may cast about us the imputation of his righteousness, as a garment of fine linen, clean and white. He is indeed the sinless one; yet hanging yonder impaled, as it were, before the offended law he becomes, in our behalf, the very chief of sinners. The curse of the whole ruined race is laid upon him. The blood upon his forehead seems like a frontlet, bearing the word "Accursed." It is by virtue of this imputation that he, being made "in the likeness of sinful flesh," delivers us from sin. He "bore our sins," and bore them away "in his body upon the tree."

But now arises the supreme question: How shall we get the benefit of this salvation which was wrought for all the children of men? If it be true that he "tasted of death for every man," then that means me. What remains to be done that I may be saved by it?

Justification.—This brings us to the third of the essential facts in the doctrine of salvation, which is justification by faith. "Look, and live!" "He

that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."

There was obviously no healing virtue in the glance. So far as that was concerned it would have answered just as well to look at the face of Moses or at the noonday sun. So faith in itself is a valueless thing. There is no essential grace in it; nevertheless it is the indispensable condition of life.

The only reason why the sufferers in the Jewish camp were healed by looking at the brazen serpent was because God had declared that so it should be. In like manner faith in Christ is made the condition of the forgiveness of sin. No one will question the fact that the God who wrought the miracle of healing in the wilderness had an indisputable right to make his own terms concerning it. It should be equally clear that the God who bestows the gift of pardoning grace has the right to place a condition upon it. This he has been pleased to do. His grace is free, free as air or water; but the air must be breathed, and a man will perish of thirst if he does not dip up the water and drink it. In like manner the great salvation is offered to all on the sole and simple condition that they will by faith receive it.

I remember seeing a tract entitled "The Gospel in Three Colors, or The Alchemy of Grace." Apart from the title page it contained not a single word; only three leaves, black, red and white. In

these three leaves we find a simple but clear exposition of the divine method of dealing with sin.

The Black Leaf stands for sin; which is the blackest thing in the universe of God.

"Black it stood as night," says Milton; and Shakespeare: "O bosom black as death!" It is affirmed that the blackest thing in nature is the blight at the heart of a flower; sin is the mortal blight at the heart of our ruined race. Is there anywhere within the infinite reach of divine wisdom aught that can eradicate it?

The Red Leaf stands for the atoning blood.

Our death sentence is executed in the person of Christ, who stands as the "daysman" or substitute for guilty men. Law is honored; justice is vindicated; guilt is expiated; holiness is satisfied. Thus we behold in Christ crucified "the wisdom and the power of God."

The White Leaf stands for cleansing.

In the marvels of alchemy there is nothing so wonderful as this, that the blackness of sin, by the washing of blood, is made white as the driven snow!

No doubt there were many in Israel who, refusing to look at the brazen serpent, perished and were buried in the desert sand. Some put their dependence on such human help as was at their command, and they died. Some could not understand how there was healing power in a brazen serpent on a pole; and, refusing to look, they died. Others, feeling no pain, declined to believe that

they were in serious danger, and, refusing to look, they died. But there were multitudes who, hearing the invitation, obeyed and lived!

“Look, look, look and live!

There is life for a look at the Crucified One;

There s life at this moment for thee.”

How simple this is! Yet all the profoundest things are simple. And Jesus said, “Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein.” I, for one, am glad that he taught the great truths in this way: for thus salvation is brought within the grasp of all. I am glad that he taught Nicodemus as if he were a child at his knee, beginning the great lesson with “Once upon a time”; for so the most wonderful of truths is made clear to the simplest of minds.

Did Nicodemus see it? Apparently not for three long years. No doubt he often thought of that kindergarten lesson in the upper room; but he did not understand the analogy of the serpent in the wilderness until, at length, he stood beneath the cross; and then he saw it! And as a little child, believing in the great salvation, he entered by faith in Christ into the kingdom of God.

In one of Mr. Moody’s after-meetings a man said to him, “I am in trouble about my soul; what shall I do?” Mr. Moody read him the story of the Crucifixion; but before he had finished the man cried, “I am a Jew! I do not believe in Jesus of

Nazareth. He was not the Messiah; and I will not so receive him." Mr. Moody said, "Very well; let me read you something else." He turned to the story of Moses and the brazen serpent. The man said, "I believe that; but I don't see how it affects my case." Then Mr. Moody read the story of this interview of Christ with Nicodemus; and when he concluded, the inquirer said, with the light of salvation in his eyes, "I see it! This is the Christ of God! God *did* so love the world that he gave his only-begotten Son to redeem it!"

HIS ROYAL SEAL

The night.—The morning.—Resurrection light on the Birth.—Its light on the Cross.—Its light on the Bible.—Its light on the Church.—Its light on Christian life.—The Hope of the world.

The night.—It was a doleful night in the Vale of Weeping. The disciples had hoped all along that Christ would restore the glory to Israel; but, alas, he was dead! He was lying in a rock-hewn sepulcher with his hands folded over his breast. The eyes that had looked on suffering with divine compassion were closed. The gracious lips that had spoken as never man spake were dumb. The feet that had gone about on errands of mercy were wrapped in red-stained cerecloth. Greatheart was dead!

The silence of the night without the sepulcher was broken only by the footfall of sentinels pacing to and fro. On a sudden the earth began to tremble; a great light shone from heaven and the soldiers fell as dead men. A troop of angels appeared and rolled the stone away; and he came forth, wiping the death-dew from his brow.

The morning.—Now look yonder! Over the heights of Bethshemesh there is a glimmering of dawn; a golden mist is rising from the Mediterranean; and behold, the sun “flames in the forehead of the morning sky.” Oh, glorious sun!

In the light of that morning the world has been growing brighter all along the succeeding ages. In its light the children of sorrow have caught the glow of a blessed hereafter and conceived a “hope that putteth not to shame.” In its light we find the solution of every problem that has to do with everlasting life.

“ How calm and beautiful the morn
That gilds the sacred tomb
Where Christ the crucified was borne
And veiled in midnight gloom!
The gates of death were closed in vain;
The Lord is risen; he lives again! ”

Resurrection light on the Birth.—The Child wrapped in swaddling-bands was he of whom it once had been written, “Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call his name Immanuel: which is, being interpreted, God with us.” Is it a mystery? Yes, surely, “Great is the mystery of godliness. He who was manifested in the flesh,”—“which things angels desire to look into.” No mortal mind can explain how Godhood and manhood are interwoven, as warp and woof, in the person of this only-begotten Son. However, the world is full of

inexplicable mysteries which are nevertheless indisputable facts.

But is the Incarnation such a fact? Was Jesus of Nazareth what he claimed to be? "I adjure thee, by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou art the Christ, the Son of God." So demanded the High Priest, and his challenge finds an echo in the experience of all thoughtful men. "Show us a sign," cried the rabbis; and the heart of the world responds, "Show us a sign, whether thou be the Christ or not."

His answer is forthcoming: "There shall no sign be given but the sign of Jonah the prophet; for as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." So be it. We will take him at his word. He proposes to vanquish death and thus vindicate his claim.

If he can do this it will place him in a category by himself alone, absolutely alone, as the one sole conqueror of death.

Once on a time there lived a man named Cæsar, who led a campaign of undisputed conquest until he met the King of Terrors and lay down to die. Once on a time there was a man named Alexander, who dreamed of universal empire and, having realized his dream, met the King of Terrors and lay down to die. Once on a time there was a man named Napoleon, at the raising of whose hand thrones and dynasties trembled and tottered to

their fall; but he, too, met the King of Terrors and, without a word, bowed low before him. Once on a time there was a man who led the armies of our Republic to a victory unparalleled in the history of the world; but he lies yonder in his mausoleum on the bank of the Hudson, with no more power than the "Amiable Child" who sleeps beneath the shadow of his tomb.

"Where are the heroes of ages past?
All to the grave gone down! The warrior's arm
Lies nerveless on the pillow of its fame.
Hushed is his stormy voice and quenched
Is the blaze of his red eyeball. Yesterday
His name was mighty in the earth.
To-day, 'tis what?"

Who, then, shall dispute with Death? Death has the right of way. Always? Nay, not in Joseph's garden. Here Christ meets Death and vanquishes him. In the darkness of the sepulcher he fights his battle singlehanded and comes forth crying, "O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?"

The sign is fulfilled. Jonah is delivered from the belly of hell! Thus does Jesus of Nazareth vindicate his right to the name "Immanuel" which was written on his swaddling-bands. For by his resurrection he hath shown himself with power to be the veritable Son of God.

Its light on the Cross.—On its transverse beam is inscribed "Jesus." The claim of redemption is

in that word. For it was written, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for it is he that shall save his people from their sins." No other of the children of men has ever put forth such a stupendous claim. He said of himself: "The Son of Man hath authority on earth to forgive sins." The reason why he could forgive sins was because he "bare our sins in his own body upon the tree." But how shall we know that his death has such saving value in the sight of God?

It all depends on the miracle of his resurrection. Show us the sign! For "if Christ hath not been raised then is our preaching vain; your faith also is vain; . . . ye are yet in your sins." He affirms that he is able to save unto the uttermost all that will believe in him. Let him prove it!

How did the Philistines learn that Samson was the unconquerable champion of Israel? They shut him up within the gates of Gaza; they fastened the bolts and compassed him about with guards; and lo, he "arose at midnight, and laid hold of the doors of the gate of the city, and the two posts, and plucked them up . . . and carried them up to the top of the mountain that is before Hebron." At the break of day the Philistines saw him yonder, leaning on their gates and bars and laughing at their discomfiture.

So do we learn the redeeming power of God's only-begotten Son. His soul could not be kept within the gates of Sheol. He came forth with the keys at his girdle. Thus the Yea and Amen of

God was put upon his power to save. And now I know! "I know him whom I have believed; and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day!"

Its light on the Bible.—It is the one Book of all the sacred books of the world that has to do with everlasting life. In the Analects of Confucius you will find an elaborate code of ethics bearing on all the relations of the present life. When Confucius was asked why he had nothing to say of immortality he answered: "I cannot say whether there is anything beyond or not; but I know that we are living here and now; and it devolves upon us to make the most of ourselves and do the best for this present world as we pass through it." A sound philosophy, do you say? Yes, if a man be no better than a sheep; but not for you and me.

The Bible is the Book of the Endless Life. It treats man not as an ephemera living for a handbreadth of time, but as a child of God, made in his likeness and after his image, and destined to live forever. It treats death not as a fatal accident but as merely an incident in life. Does death end all? Not in the philosophy of this Book. Death ends nothing; it begins all. Life here is merely the vestibule in which we robe ourselves for the life farther on.

And this Book of the Endless Life is also the Biography of the Lord of Life. He walks

through its pages like a king through the corridors of his palace, from its opening prophecy of the Seed of Woman to its last vision of the Sun of Righteousness arising with healing in his wings. And always he walks as the Lord of Life.

So when by his resurrection he vindicates his authority as the Incarnate Word of God he, at the same time, vindicates the authority of the written Word. The Bible and his resurrection go hand in hand. Find me a man who disbelieves this Book and I will show you one who lifts his eyebrows at the resurrection of Christ. In these days of biblical controversy, when all sorts of arguments are presented *pro* and *contra*, let this fact be deeply emphasized: that, when all is said and done, the ultimate and incontrovertible argument for the truth of Scripture is in the resurrection of Christ as the Incarnate Word and therefore the living complement of the Written Word of God.

Its light on the Church.—The Church is founded upon the proposition, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." If that can be demonstrated, the Church with its propaganda has a reason for life. Otherwise it has none. For if Christ be not risen our preaching is vain.

" Heavy fall the shadows on the dim horizon:

Veiled the starry eyes from wistful eyes below;

Cold and still thou liest in thine earthly prison;

Whither, Lord and Master, whither shall we go?"

It is not surprising that Peter and his fellow-disciples lost heart after the crucifixion. He said, "I go a fishing," and they said, "We also come with thee." Why not? Why should they continue their itineraries among the villages of Galilee preaching the saving power of the gospel of Christ if he himself had gone the way of all flesh? Their occupation was truly at an end; and there was nothing left but to return to their boats and nets. But when they met Christ face to face and knew that he who had been dead was living and alive forevermore, they were straightway baptized with power and enthusiasm and went everywhere preaching the gospel, because there was substantial ground for it.

Nor is it surprising that Paul, as inquisitor of the Sanhedrin, went up and down breathing slaughter against the followers of Christ. Why not? He verily thought that he was doing God's service; for to his mind the death of Christ had proven the falsity of his claim; so that his gospel was a manifest imposture. Was ever a man so taken aback as he when he met the living Christ on that journey down to Damascus? Right about face, now! There was no alternative for the conscientious man. He saw that the Saviourship of Jesus had been verified by his triumph over death. What could he do thenceforth but go everywhere proclaiming, "Jesus . . . is the Son of God"!

And this is the commission of the Church. "Woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel!" The

gospel is true; and the obligation of truth is upon every man and woman in this world of ours. Wherefore go tell all people that Christ is risen from the dead and that he hath power on earth to forgive sin!

Its light on Christian life.—The promise of Christ is, “Lo, I am with you always. . . . I will not leave you comfortless; I will come again.” What does that mean?

In some quarters there is an effort to explain it away as a reference to his influential presence. We hear much also of the “immanence” of Christ. I do not like the word “immanence” in this connection. It has a cold, mechanical sound. It suggests the enveloping atmosphere, which presses upon us always with a power of fifteen pounds to the square inch or thereabouts. This is not the meaning of Christ in the promise referred to: he said precisely what he meant, namely, that he would be personally with us. And he is thus with us as our friend and counsellor and guide. He links arms with us, as it were, and walks beside us in all our journey through the Valley of Tears, through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, through the gates into the Heavenly City.

The Hope of the World.—Thus it appears that all that makes life worth living is emphasized and glorified by this great miracle.

If Christ be not risen, we are bereaved indeed! "If we have only hoped in this life in Christ, we are of all men most pitiable."

The soul of Mary Magdala was cast down within her while Jesus lay in his sepulcher. He had been her dearest friend. He had lent a helping hand to lift her from the deepest mire. And he was dead! It was as if the light of her eyes had gone out. Thus she lingered at the empty grave when the other women had gone their way. Hearing a footstep behind her she turned and, seeing with her tear-dimmed eyes a man whom she supposed to be the gardener, she cried, "Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him." He spoke—a word only, a word whereat the currents of her life went surging hot and fast: "Mary!" Hope, happiness, heaven, all sprang to life again; and falling at his feet she cried, "Rabboni!" that is to say, "My Master!" Thus the hope of the resurrection morning translates itself at once into happiness and usefulness. Our profession of faith can find no deeper or higher expression than this, "My Master!"

God help us to keep our windows open toward the East. Break, O morning of the resurrection, upon our souls, too often overwhelmed by sordid doubts and fears! Dawn upon the universal Church that it may go forth conquering and to conquer in the name of the risen Christ. Shine into the trysting places where we make our feeble

prayers, and give us faith to realize that he ever liveth to make intercession for us! Shine into our night of sorrow that, looking from the darkness of an open grave to the glory of the open heavens, we may praise him in whom life and immortality are brought to light! Blessed be God for the day-break of the resurrection. Oh, glorious sun!

HIS INFLUENCE

Two streams.—“The words of Jesus prove his life.”—
The proof of the Christian home.—The proof of the
workshop.—The exchange.—The schoolhouse.—
The hospital.—The State.—The Church.—The
Christian himself.—The vital question.

Two streams.—The history of the last nineteen centuries has been marked by the flow of two parallel but discordant rivers. One is the River of Gospel Truth which takes its rise at Bethlehem and, with the beauty of heaven reflected on its placid surface, moves ever on toward a boundless sea. The other is the River of Antichrist, having its source by the gate of Bethlehem, but pursuing its way like an underground river which appears and disappears and reappears at intervals in ever-varying forms. Now it is called Atheism, and again Pantheism, or Gnosticism, or Agnosticism, or Nihilism, or Secularism, or Rationalism, or Materialism, or Fatalism, or Transcendentalism; but, whatever its name, it is always the same River of Antichrist; and its current, whether calm or turbulent, ever speaks with the same voice, “Away with this Jesus which is called the Christ!”

This opposition to Christ reached its maximum

in the infidelity of the eighteenth century, when it was championed in Great Britain by Hume and Gibbon, in France by Voltaire and Rousseau, and in America by Thomas Paine and his coterie of friends. Its chief advocate in Germany was Immanuel Kant, who called his philosophy "Transcendental Idealism." He began with a denial of the supernatural, which of course ruled out the entire teaching of Christ, including immortality and a personal God. The keynote was thus struck for Germany, which then became the world's center of infidelity and has so continued even to this day.

In the universities of that country there are approximately thirty thousand students, of whom three hundred or more are Americans. These students return in due time equipped with a supply of dream-spun theories "made in Germany," to be exploited and oftentimes approved over here after they have been decently interred on their native heath. The trouble is that we Americans take such speculations too seriously. In Utopia phantoms are facts and speculation is diversion; but in America we frivol away valuable time and energy in the vain endeavor to adjust air-castles to the uses of practical life.

In 1835 a "Life of Jesus" was published by David Strauss of the University of Tübingen in which he advanced what is known as "the mythical theory" of the gospel. He assumed that Jesus was probably a good man, but undertook to show

that the gospel records are a mere fabric of myths, composed by the infatuated friends of Jesus a century or more after his death. The book created a sensation, as a matter of course. The theory was easily exploded by demonstrated facts; but, alas, "the evil a man does lives after him."

The climax of German infidelity was reached when Professor Drews of the University of Berlin delivered a course of lectures to prove that "Jesus never lived." The late Mrs. Eddy never made a more grotesque draught on the possibilities of human credulity. It was no wonder that even the "Moderates" of Germany were moved to call a halt. An assembly was convened in Berlin to formulate a protest. Ten thousand people came together; the meeting was opened with Luther's hymn, "A Mighty Fortress is Our God," and all united in repeating the Confession of Faith. The Kaiser was not present, but he sent a salutation which began thus: "Tell the people that the words of Jesus prove his life. His teaching lives in our hearts to-day as in the hearts of the simple fishermen who heard it nineteen hundred years ago."

"The words of Jesus proves his life."—In that statement we have a proposition of far-reaching significance. For "words are things," as Carlyle was fond of saying; and in the logic of events the words of Jesus have been crystallized into institutions; and institutions are facts which cannot easily be disposed of.

Christ himself said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." So far from "passing away," they have furnished the mighty factors in the progress of the ages. Things do not stand alone. "Out of nothing nothing comes." Movements are not automatic; there is always something or somebody behind them. The man who believes in "perpetual motion" is either a dreamer or a simpleton.

If the story of Jesus is a conglomeration of myths, who invented them? If Christ himself is a myth, how did he ever come to be what he is in this world of ours? Theodore Parker was an avowed unbeliever, but he drew the line at this point, saying, "Jesus must be measured by the shadow he has cast upon the world; no, rather, by the light he has shed upon it. Shall we be told that such a man never lived? Suppose that Plato and Newton never lived; then who did their works and thought their thoughts? It would take a Newton to forge a Newton. What man could have fabricated a Jesus? None but a Jesus."

We deal with things as they are. Not theories but conditions confront us. The words of Jesus have, in the process of the centuries, developed into certain institutions which cannot be flippantly bowed out of court, but must be accounted for.

The proof of the Christian home.—This has crystallized around the word of Jesus which he addressed to the Seventy on their itinerary: "Into

whatsoever house ye enter, first say, 'Peace be to this house!' "

It is not affirmed that there were no households before the beginning of the Christian era; but it is affirmed that this word of Jesus makes a home of a house.

Let us enter a Christian home and look about us. The man, as head of the family, is no longer an arbitrary despot as he used to be. In a Roman household he had practically the power of life and death; here he is the "house-band," bound to his wife by the indissoluble tie of wedlock, as the Master said, "What therefore God hath joined together let not man put asunder."

And the woman—what of her? There has been a stupendous change in the status of womanhood since the beginning of the Christian era. A wife is no longer the abject slave of her husband or his fair-weather toy. She no longer counts and publishes her divorces by the rings on her fingers. If her rights are denied she can at least clamor for them. The crooked woman who appealed to Jesus in the Synagogue has at length been "loosed of her infirmities." The names "wife" and "mother" have been sanctified by the fact that "the God of all good Christians was of a woman born."

And what about the children? The light of the gospel has fallen also upon them. The mind of the civilized world is enlisted to-day in behalf of the little people. We cannot forget that Christ took a child upon his knee and said, "To such belongeth

the kingdom of heaven," and "Verily I say unto you, except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven."

The atmosphere of the home circle has been changed every way. How shall we account for it? Things when left to themselves do not move forward but backward. The law of society, like the law of nature, is "reversion to type"; that is, back to primitive barbarism. The evolution of the modern home, with all its happy and blessed associations, is accounted for when we lift our eyes and see Christ standing in the doorway and hear him saying, "Peace be to this house!"

The proof of the workshop.—Here is another of the institutional facts of our time which must be accounted for. It crystallizes around that epoch-making word of Jesus, "The laborer is worthy of his hire."

We do not say that there were no workers nineteen centuries ago; but we insist that there was no such toiler as the handicraftsman of these days.

In Rome there were three classes: the patricians, who monopolized all wealth with its concomitants; the plebeians, who lived on the *congiaria* or charity of the State; and the multitude of slaves, recruited from the conquered nations who passed under the yoke. These slaves were the workmen. A plebeian refused to work, because that was the business of bondmen. And the toiler received no

wage; only his "keep," and possibly a *douceur* which was thrown like a bone to a dog.

Go into the workshop now and look at the man at the bench. He is a self-respecting man. He works not for a "tip" or a *douceur*, but for a *quid pro quo*; not for "bed and board," but for an adequate wage. He is a free man; insomuch that if his wages are not satisfactory he can "strike" if need be. Was there ever a strike in the brickyards of Egypt? Was there ever a strike among the slaves who built the palaces of Rome? The very excesses of our labor-unions are evidence of the fact that, for some reason, the cause of industry has moved grandly on. Slaves have gone out of fashion. The man at the bench has broken his shackles.

" His brow is wet with honest sweat;
He earns whate'er he can;
And looks the whole world in the face,
For he owes not any man."

There is something behind all this. What is it? The word that was spoken by Jesus, "The laborer is worthy of his hire," struck a new chord in the solution of the industrial problem. The Carpenter of Nazareth, who made plows for the Judean farmers and mended rickety furniture for the housewives of the village, has dignified labor through all the ages.

The exchange is another institution which must be accounted for. And the word of Jesus around which it has crystallized is that which was addressed to the man who buried his one talent in the ground: "Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the bankers; and at my coming I should have received back mine own with interest."

It would appear from these words that there was an exchange in those days; but it was not like the exchange of our time. The business of the marketplace was done with shekels and denarii, or in the bartering of one commodity for another. Go into any of our bourses or exchanges now and you will find a different order of things. What are these bits of paper passing from hand to hand? Not cash, but I. O. U's: bonds, debentures, promissory notes, certifying to the confidence of men in their fellow-men.

The banking system is a product of the Christian era. The only place of safe deposit in ancient times was a hole in the ground or a chamber in the wall. The talent of our commercial life is no longer buried in the ground, but put into circulation to make an income for the trustee and due interest for its owner. And the owner in every case is God.

The talent was characterized by Christ as "my money," and the man to whom it was entrusted was bound, as a faithful steward, to "put it to the bankers." It is this circulation of the talent, on

the basis of mutual confidence, that makes the world go around. And this is in pursuance of the teaching of Christ, whose gospel rings with the double duty of an interchange of confidence and loyalty to God.

The schoolhouse too is the crystallization of that great word of Jesus, "I am the Truth."

Oh, yes, there were schools and schoolhouses before the Christian era; but in so far as the universal diffusion of truth was concerned, they were limited to the narrowest spheres and their influence was like those flashes of electric light which merely serve to make visible the darkness of original chaos. The advent of Christ was the rising of a sun with healing in its wings. His word, "I am the Truth," was a sonorous echo of the creative edict, "Let there be light!"

The problem of universal education is being solved along the line of Christian progress. Wherever the gospel has gone the schoolmaster has gone with it. And from the Kindergarten to the University the text-books of the civilized world are full of gospel truth. The masterpieces of art, the great oratorios, the triumphs of science and philosophy, the laws and jurisprudence of nations, the practice of medicine, and the entire literature of the world are so permeated with the gospel that to omit Christ and his teachings would be to utterly eviscerate them. All truth centers in him who said, "I am the Truth; and the uplift of the peo-

ple in general enlightenment is proof demonstrative of the vital influence of Him who said, "I am the Light of the world!"

The hospital.—Here is an institution which is, by common consent, one of the distinctive marks of our civilization. It has crystallized about this word of Jesus, "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister." It stands for the self-denying charity of men toward their fellow-men.

Were there no hospitals before Christ? A few weeks ago I spent a day among the ruins of Pompeii, which was one of the fashionable resorts of that time. I saw there the ruins of homes, palaces, forums, wine-shops and dens of iniquity, but nowhere the trace of a House of Mercy.

The best hospital of those days was down by the Sheep-Market in Jerusalem where the friendless sick were laid in open porches to await the moving of the waters of an intermittent spring. The beggar sat with outstretched hands at the entrance of the Temple or the gateway of the rich man. The Magdalene was left to the cold mercy of the streets. Now the lazaretto has been supplanted by the hospital; the aged and helpless, the widow and orphan, are cared for; and everywhere in Christendom they are systematically cared for.

The Golden Rule of Christ is regnant in the world. There is a new spirit of humanity among us. It is the spirit of ministration; the law of

Christianized society is the royal law of Christ. "Bear ye one another's burdens." The man whose life is controlled by the maxim, "Look out for number one," is giving place to another and a better man who follows Christ, whether consciously or not, in looking out for number two and lending a helping hand to the other man.

The State is among the greatest of our institutions. It is the outgrowth of the words of Jesus, "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's."

This was spoken in connection with the tribute money. "Show me the tribute money," said he; "whose is this image and superscription?" And they answered, "Cæsar's"; whereupon he said, "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's"; that is, pay your capitation tax; in other words, be a loyal citizen, because the State is ordained of God.

There were Governments before Christ; but what were they? Lax democracies, tyrannical oligarchies or arbitrary sovereignties. By the far-reaching word of Jesus the institution of Government was put upon an entirely new and rational basis. On the one hand it was founded in the ordinance of God, and on the other on the consent of the governed. In those two facts Government finds its sanction and assumes the responsibility of law, order, and the vindication of the rights of all.

Ask the Kaiser whether Jesus ever lived, and

his answer is Germany. Ask the President of our Republic whether Jesus ever lived; and he would reply, "Why, certainly; else I would never have been here and this country would not be what it is."

The men who governed Rome were invested with despotic power. The last of such sovereigns in Christendom is the Russian Czar; and to-day the Douma is convened about him. There is not a nation in the civilized world without a Parliament; which means that the two great principles of government which were enunciated by Jesus are dominant everywhere except in the regions of darkness and the shadow of death. The time is not far distant when the fifty Parliaments of the world will sit together and take counsel for universal peace; and in that council the ruling Diplomat will have upon his vesture and his thigh a name written, "The Prince of Peace"; for it is under the influence of his word that the nations are approaching the ultimate Commonwealth of God.

The Church.—What shall be said of that? It is surely an institution which must be reckoned with. It stands for five hundred millions of people in the world to-day! It has crystallized around the word of Jesus, "And when ye pray say, Thy kingdom come."

It is not affirmed that the Church, as it now exists, is co-extensive with the thought in the mind of the Master when he spoke of "the Kingdom of

God." But it may be affirmed without a fear of contradiction that the Church is the great organism through which God is working for the setting up of that Kingdom on earth. As such, the Church was founded on the Messiahship of Jesus, as upon a rock, so that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

If you stand in the doorway of any Christian Church you will hear the people singing, "All hail the power of Jesus' name!" And presently you will see them passing out. Where are they going? The Master said "Go!" and they are doing as he bade them. "Go down to thy house and show what great things the Lord hath done for thee"—"Go out into the highways and hedges and constrain them to come in"—"Go ye therefore and make disciples of all the nations." In other words, they are going to co-operate with Christ in the answering of their own prayer, "Thy kingdom come." And the issue will show that they are going to bring in the Golden Age.

The Christian himself.—No fact of these times is more conspicuous than Christian character. It must be dealt with as an existing and indisputable fact. It is the crystallization of the word of Jesus, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."

The hundreds of millions of people in the world who call themselves Christians are not perfect, not one of them; nor do they claim to be. But take

them by and large, with all their imperfections, they stand for what is best and noblest in the moral life of these days. Did Christ ever live? Here stands the Christian! How else will you account for him? He has taken Christ as his Saviour, his Exemplar and his Leader, and is simply trying to follow him. If you ask him to account for himself he will answer, as Richard Baxter did, "I am not what I ought to be; I am not what I mean to be; but, by the grace of God in Christ, I am what I am!"

Now, these are facts; and as such they demand an explanation. To answer the sophistries of Professor Drews would be to carry coals to Newcastle. By the same logical method which he employed it was proved by his colleague, Dr. Wurm, that Luther never lived. Suppose you were to make it appear, by macaronic logic of a similar character, that my father never lived, what then? How should I confute you. It is enough to say that I am here. Children do not occur without sires. Account for me! You might perhaps be able to ratiocinate my mother into a myth; but I should still see her sitting by the chimney corner in the old home and hear her singing,

"Jesus my all to heaven is gone;
He whom I fix my hopes upon;
His track I see, and I'll pursue
The narrow way till him I view!"

No, the question is not, "Did Jesus ever live?"

Nor is it "Does he live to-day?" He sits upon his throne and governs men and nations; and men and nations are in evidence to prove it. More than that, we affirm his presence here and now.

We may not climb the heavenly steeps
To bring the Lord Christ down;
In vain we search the lowest deeps,
For him no depths can drown;

But warm, sweet, tender, even yet
A present help is he;
And faith has yet its Olivet,
And love its Galilee.

The healing of the seamless dress
Is by our beds of pain;
We touch him in life's throng and press,
And we are whole again.

The vital question.—No, these are not the questions that require our hardest thinking or most deeply concern us. The vital question, the question of all questions for living, thinking men, is this: Is the mind that was in Christ Jesus also in me? Do I live in him; and do my walk and conversation show that he lives in me?

PART III

ITS AUTHORITY: THE BIBLE

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PART III.—ITS AUTHORITY: THE BIBLE

WHY I BELIEVE IT

There is a presumption in its favor.—Its own claim.—Its claim is verified.—Its indestructibility.—Its promulgation.—Its literary value.—It makes men.—It makes nations.—Christ believed it.—It has power to save.—“It finds me.”

If I regarded the Scripture as a mingled tissue of truth and falsehood, I could not honestly say that I believe it. But I do believe the Bible: and I mean precisely what I say. To my mind the Book is not true in spots, but true and trustworthy from beginning to end.

And this is the historic faith of the Christian Church along the ages. The enemies of the Bible are so vociferous that at times one is moved to lament as Elijah did under the juniper-tree, “I, even I only, am left”; but the Lord reassures us, “I have left me a great multitude who have not bowed their knees to the antibiblical Baal.” Be of good courage, therefore.

It is a great thing to be a conservative. We are

bound to move with the moving world, providing we move not away from the immovable faith which was "once for all delivered unto the saints." We are bound to keep open house for Truth; but we are bound no less to double-bolt our doors when Falsehood knocks and shouts "Let me in!"

Whether a man believes his Bible or rejects it, two things may be fairly required of him. On the one hand he should frankly and truthfully state his position without mumbling or mouthing it; and on the other he should be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh him a reason for it.

The following now are my reasons for holding that the Bible is the true and trustworthy Word of God:

There is a presumption in its favor.—If there is a God anywhere in the universe, and if we are his children, he would surely not leave us in doubt respecting the great problems which have to do with our spiritual and eternal life. If an earthly father advises his sons and daughters, in their distress and bewilderment, assuring them of his plans and purposes concerning them, is it reasonable to suppose that our heavenly Father would do less?

Plato lamented that he was adrift on a raft upon an open sea with no rudder, no star above to guide him; yet he, pagan though he was, ventured the hope that in good time "the gods would give us a staunch boat to sail in." This was but the expres-

sion of a universal instinct. If there is a God he must reveal himself to his children. There is, then, somewhere in the world, a clear and authoritative Word of God. Where is it?

Its own claim.—The Bible claims to be inspired; nor does it leave the meaning of “inspiration” in doubt. The word is *theopnustia*, “breathed of God.” It says, in explicit terms: “Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work.” And it speaks no less definitely as to the method of its inspiration: “For no prophecy ever came by the will of man; but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit.”

If the Bible is not true, then it sets up a fraudulent claim; but if that claim can be verified we have no alternative but to receive it at its face value and frame our lives accordingly. The question, *pro* or *contra*, must be determined by internal evidence. We proceed, therefore, to open the Book: and we shall find that the proof of its inspiration is as complete and satisfactory as that which it furnishes to substantiate the immortality of the soul, the divinity of Christ or any other fundamental truth.

Its claim is verified.—An examination of the contents of the Book discloses the following facts:

Its unity.—Here is a volume made up of sixty-

six books, on a large variety of themes, written by forty odd writers of various tongues and nationalities, writing at intervals along a period of sixteen hundred years, and representing all degrees of racial development from barbarism to clearest light. Yet the sixty-six books thus composed, when bound together, constitute a harmonious and consistent whole; yielding one system of doctrine, one code of ethics, one "rule of faith and practice" for all the children of men.

Shall we call this a fortuitous circumstance? The folly of such a statement would immediately be recognized in any other province. If forty odd persons of different tongues and degrees of musical culture were to pass through the organ-loft of a church, at long intervals, and, without possibility of collusion, strike sixty-six notes which when combined should yield the theme of the grandest oratorio ever heard, I respectfully submit that the man who regarded that as "a fortuitous circumstance" would by universal consent be regarded as a fool. The conclusion would be irresistible that there was one controlling mind, a great tone-master behind it.

Its completeness.—The Bible is the only book that touches and solves every one of the great problems that have to do with human destiny. You cannot ask a question concerning God or immortality or salvation which it does not answer, and answer so clearly as to satisfy the simplest mind. It furnishes a Code of Morals also which covers

every possible question that can be asked respecting the conduct of life. The Decalogue and its exposition in the Sermon on the Mount are universally recognized as the two perfect ethical symbols. When the Book has thus spoken of truth and righteousness it has traversed the entire circumference of human experience; for truth and righteousness are the two hemispheres of man.

And having spoken in this manner it leaves nothing more to be said. Wherefore it concludes with the word "Finis." The Book was thus closed forever. There was to be no *addendum*; there were no *errata*. That word "Finis" is a challenge to the centuries: "I am complete; supplant or supplement me if you can!"

Its up-to-dateness.—Here is the oldest book in the world. A portion of it was old when Cecrops founded Egypt. The book of Job had been written three thousand years when Chaucer opened the springs of "English undefyled." The book of Ruth was twenty-five hundred years old when America was discovered. Yet there are hundreds of millions of people who read their Bibles daily and find them fresh as the break of day.

This is because the Book was adjusted in the beginning to all the vicissitudes of time and the progress of coming ages. Its truths, its ethical precepts, its "exceeding great and precious promises" are like Oriental spices, which the more they are rubbed give forth the more of fragrant sweetness. The gospel is "good news." It is as

new and fresh as when the evangel came to paradise. It is the last tidings from the heaven of a loving God.

Its tone of authority.—It might be supposed that a book dealing with spiritual truths, all of which lie beyond the purview of the physical senses, would speak with some measure of reserve or uncertainty; but there are no “ifs” or “perhapses” or “peradventures” here. How could a divine book speak that way? We want no guesses about life and immortality. We must know. We want authority; and there can be no final authority with respect to these problems except a divine *ipse dixit*. Wherefore the Book says always, “Yea and Amen,” and “Thus saith the Lord,” and “Verily, verily, I say unto you.”

Put an “if” into the Decalogue, and you lay a charge of dynamite under the morality of men and nations. Put an “if” under the manger at Bethlehem, and you destroy the happiness of a million homes. Put an “if” under Calvary, and you make us of all men most miserable. Put an “if” under the empty sepulchre in Joseph’s garden, and our visions of life and immortality vanish into thin air. But blessed be God, there are no “ifs” in the Bible. It gives no uncertain sound. It speaks as the oracles of God.

Its truth: its faultless, flawless truth.—The claim of absolute inerrancy is not made for any current version of the Scriptures. It would be singular indeed if the hundreds of current versions

were so absolutely identical as to show no discrepancies. Let it be noted, however, that these discrepancies are so insignificant as not to affect in the slightest degree the integrity of the doctrinal and ethical teaching. And let it be observed also—and this I wish to emphasize—that they are such as to convince any candid mind that they were not in the original but have crept into the text in the process of translation and transmission. This being true, they furnish of themselves a mighty argument for the absolute inerrancy of the original autograph.

If it be replied that no man living has ever seen that “original autograph” and that we are not practically concerned with it, we answer that the objection proves either too little or too much. For no living man has ever seen the Incarnate Word of God. He lived only thirty-three years in this world of ours and then vanished. The only knowledge that we have of him, apart from the Scriptures, is through his followers; for every Christian is, so to speak, a current version of the Incarnate Word. Christ, like the Bible, has suffered by transcription through the ages.

It is nevertheless of supreme importance that we shall believe that Christ, as he once lived on earth, was the perfect Son of God. And the very mistakes of believers in their earnest yet inadequate efforts to copy his life and character are evidences of his perfection. We are ever striving to get back to the original Christ; precisely as rever-

ent students of the Scriptures seek, by both textual and historical criticism, to reach the "original autograph," that is, the "first edition" of the written Word of God.

If the destructive critics were to be taken at their word the Bible is full of frightful errors. Its prophecies have failed, its history is not historical, its science is unscientific, its stories are myths, its facts are fabulous; and there is practically nothing trustworthy in it. We make bold to affirm, on the contrary, that as yet the destructive critics have not been able to produce a single error or discrepancy which cannot be most reasonably explained as either purely imaginary or unimportant.

Of its ten thousand prophecies not one has miscarried yet. The owl and bittern, dwelling among the ruins of innumerable cities on which the curse of divine judgment was pronounced in olden times, confirm their truth.

The history in the Bible is the only authentic History of the World. It is a deep river, flowing backward in its course past the ruins of antiquity, past the confusion of tongues, past the deluge and the creation, past the solitude of primeval ages, past the floating nebulæ, and still beyond to the ineffable glory, where it finds its source beneath the heavenly throne: "In the beginning, God."

And that history has come out of the ordeal of long centuries of criticism without a successful challenge. Archæologists are unearthing confirmations every day. It used to be said, for example,

that the Battle of the Four Kings was purely fabulous; till along came a man with a spade and dug up a royal library in the valley of the Euphrates, bearing date of 640 B. C., wherein were found the names of the Four Kings. This man with the spade is continually verifying the historicity of the Bible in that way.

The same can be affirmed of its science. It is frequently said that "the Bible was not intended to be a scientific book," giving the impression that it makes little difference whether its scientific statements are trustworthy or not. The question, however, is not whether the Bible was intended to be a scientific book, but whether it is true or not. *Falsus in uno, falsus in omnibus*. If the Bible cannot be trusted at this point, what ground have we for committing ourselves to its guidance in spiritual things? You have impugned the veracity of your witness.

The Bible is the book of origins. It treats of Biology, Zoölogy, Ethnology, Geology, Astronomy, indeed of every department of natural science. And its statements hold true. If it be claimed that they do not fall in with certain scientific hypotheses of these times, we answer that God never guesses. It is worthy of note, in this connection, that a hundred years ago there were more than eighty so-called "scientific theories" before the French Institute, every one of which was alleged to contradict the Scriptures. Where are they now? All have died the death; but the Book lives on.

So much for my third reason for believing the Bible, namely, its truth as shown by an examination of its contents. My next reason is

Its indestructibility.—No other book has ever provoked such fierce opposition. If fires and acids could have destroyed it, it would have been lost and forgotten long ago. The ancient cities of the world were lit with bonfires of Bibles; yet the Book survives without the smell of fire upon it. The corrosive acids of unfair criticism have been poured upon it from time immemorial; but they have not destroyed a single page of it.

The Book is its own greatest miracle. It stands, to use the words of Gladstone, as “the impregnable rock.” He was thinking of Gibraltar, which guards the Gates of Hercules where the storms of the Atlantic and Mediterranean meet in a mighty grapple. Its foot is strewn with the wreckage of ships that have defied it; but Gibraltar stands. In like manner the Bible survives its foes. “Surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the word of our God shall stand forever!”

Its promulgation.—The Book is printed in more than five hundred languages and dialects, and is scattered over the world like leaves of the tree of life. The interest which it excites in the universal mind, and which separates it immeasurably from

all literature of mere human origin, is attested by the fact that within forty-eight hours after the Oxford Version was issued two million five hundred thousand copies were disposed of. It is the "best seller" in the literary commerce of the world to-day.

Its literary value.—The Bible is literature; but it is singular literature. It is "a Book among books," but the only one that claims the authorship of God. It is so comprehensive that the man who knows his Bible only is an educated man. In Froude's life of Bunyan he says that in the enforced silence and solitude of Bedford jail the prisoner had only two books; but "one of these," he significantly adds, "was the Bible, which is of itself a liberal education."

Where will you find such poetry as here? Let Milton speak: "There are no songs like the songs of Zion." Other poets when compared with those of Scripture are as twittering swallows in a field of morning larks. Never have minstrels sung like those who drank from "Siloa's brook that flows fast by the oracle of God."

Where will you find such eloquence as here? Where will you parallel the plea of Judah for his brethren at the Egyptian Court, or that of Aaron for the emancipation of the Jewish slaves; the address of Nathan on "The Little Ewe Lamb" or the cry of John the Baptist in the wilderness; the

sermon of Stephen in the Court of Jerusalem, or of Peter at Pentecost, or of Paul on Mars' Hill? And what shall be said of the eloquence of Him who "spake as never man spake"? Let Webster say: "From the time that at my mother's knee I learned to lisp the sacred writings, they have been my daily study. If there be anything in my oratorical style or thought to be commended, the credit is due to my kind parents who instilled into my mind an early love of the Word of God."

"A glory gilds the sacred page
Majestic, like the sun;
It gives a light to every age;
It gives, but borrows none."

It makes men.—Who shall explain the subtle metaphysical force in the Bible that grips hold of a sinner and somehow transforms him, changes his heart and conscience and will, and makes him a new man?

Has any other book such power? Does the Koran or the Zendavesta transform men and set their faces toward truth and righteousness and heaven and God? An old Highlander once said to Claudius Buchanan, "I cannot argue with you; I cannot present theological facts or reasons; I cannot explain the philosophy of revelation; but I know this: that when I was a man of evil character this Book got hold of me and quelled the tiger in me!" There is the master fact; the Bible makes

men. The best people, here, everywhere and always, are those who believe in the Bible and live that way.

It makes nations.—The Bible has gone in the forefront of civilization all along the centuries.

The three great Powers to-day are America and England and Germany, with one other coming to the front. As for England it was publically affirmed by Queen Victoria that "the Bible was the secret of its greatness." As for Germany, at the close of the Franco-Prussian War Père Hyacinthe declared to his people that the reason for their calamitous defeat lay in the fact that every German soldier had a Bible in his knapsack. As for America, its free institutions are founded on Bible principles. The Preamble of its Declaration of Independence is an echo of Paul's sermon on Mars' Hill. Our whole fabric is permeated with the teachings of Christ.

The other nation now coming to the front is Japan. A few years ago a Japanese student named Siiji Hishida asked to be enrolled as a member of the church which I serve. His name is still upon its roster. On finishing his post-graduate course at Columbia he received the degree of Doctor of Laws. On the eve of his departure to his native country he left with me his Japanese Bible as a token of friendship. I said to him, "Hishida, are you going back to advocate the teachings of that Book?" His answer was: "I love my coun-

try. We want your light, your freedom, your constitutional rights. We want your civilization. I am satisfied that we cannot have it without taking the Bible along with it." That man is now one of the foremost representatives of the Japanese Government in Korea and he still remains a firm believer in the Word of God.

Christ believed it.—He spoke of it as "truth" and as "the Word of God." He preached it. He practised it. In his threefold temptation in the wilderness he thrice replied to the adversary, "It is written"; and it is a significant fact that the three passages quoted on that occasion were all from the book of Deuteronomy, which is pronounced a forgery by the destructive critics.

He adventured the integrity and success of his redemptive work upon the truth of the Bible; and in doing so he chose those very passages which are most discredited by the mischievous critics of our time. He stood for the record of creation, the destruction of the Cities of the Plain, and even the "incredible story of Jonah." He said, "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it except the sign of Jonah, the prophet; for as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." It is little wonder that those who deny the sign should also deny the resurrection of Christ.

He made the Bible the determining factor in the problem of his kingdom. He commissioned his disciples to "go preach." Preach what? The Word. This was "the good seed" which they were to sow. The world is to be converted by it.

And while the teaching of Jesus with respect to the truth of Scripture was expressed in such positive terms, it is singular that he never, on the other hand, uttered a word or syllable to indicate that he supposed it to be otherwise than true from beginning to end. How shall we account for that? We face a threefold alternative. First, there are no errors in Scripture. Second, the errors were there, but Christ was not aware of them. Third, he was aware of these errors, but did not choose to tell.

In the first case the Scriptures must be regarded as true. In the second case, if Christ was not aware of the alleged errors, then the destructive critic of our time is wiser than he and therefore more worthy to be our spiritual guide. In the third case, if he knew there were such errors in Scripture and did not tell, he was not an honest man.

How easily he could have saved us from all perplexity! But he kept silent. Oh, that eloquent silence! It can only be accounted for by assuming that he believed the Bible to be true. And if this book was true enough for Christ it is true enough for every Christian; it is true enough for me.

It has power to save.—In every heart, down below all other wants and aspirations, there is a profound longing to know the way of spiritual life. The world is crying, "What shall I do to be saved?" Of all books the Bible is the only one that answers that universal cry.

There are others that set forth morality with more or less correctness; but there is none that suggests a blotting out of the record of the mislived past or an escape from the penalty of the broken law. In the midst of these oracles stands the Cross, throwing its shadow four ways toward all the horizons of human life. Out of this blessed Book proceeds a voice that is heard nowhere else: "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have eternal life."

There are other books that have poetry; but there is none that sings the song of salvation or gives a troubled soul the peace that floweth like a river.

There are other books that have eloquence; but there is no other that enables us to behold God himself with outstretched hands pleading with men to turn and live.

There are other books that have science, but there is no other that can give the soul a definite assurance of the future life, so that it can say, "I know him whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to guard that which I have committed unto him against that day!"

There are other books of philosophy, but there is none that can make us wise with respect to those great doctrines which center in life and immortality.

There are other books of history, but they are like ships carrying lights astern to cast a lurid glare on a wake of receding foam, while this carries a searchlight at the masthead to illuminate the whole way to heaven. There is no other that tells the story of divine love reaching from the remote councils of eternity to its consummation on Calvary; the "old, old story of Jesus and his love." It is the Book that enlightens and sustains and stimulates; but above all it is the Book that points the path to everlasting life.

I have given my ten reasons for believing that the Bible is the Word of God. Now one more. I believe the Bible because

"It finds me."—Those are the words of Coleridge; and I make them mine. The Bible found me on a memorable day more than fifty years ago. It found me perplexed with a boy's fear of the unknown. It calmed my fears and gave me the hope that maketh not ashamed. It has found me once and again in the Vale of Baca and wiped away my tears. It has found me and upheld me in seasons of weakness and discouragement. It has found and never failed me. And, when I come to the border-line between time and eternity, it shall find me there and give me a rod and staff to

lean on. Oh, blessed Book! May my right hand forget its cunning and my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth if I forget thee!

These are my reasons. What think you? One thing is clear: if you reject the truth of the Bible it devolves upon you to be able to give an answer to every man that asketh a reason for your doing so. Be not taken up in the lips of talkers. Do your own thinking. Be honest in your rejection of the Scriptures, if thus it must be. Take down the old book, dust-covered, perhaps, and search it. Be man enough to put away prejudice and to reject second-hand opinions. Stand on your own feet. Farm out your thinking to nobody. Open the Book and read for yourself.

The Bible is its own best witness. Search it with a mind open to conviction, and I am confident you will arrive at the same conclusion that has forced itself upon me. The Bible is a book to live by and to die by. It is worthy to be received as an infallible rule of faith and practice. It is true and trustworthy every way. It is the veritable Word of God.

WHAT SHALL WE DO WITH IT?

The deposit of truth.—Divinely given.—A compendium.
—Entrusted to the Church.—The responsibility of the ministry.—What is the result?—Where is the remedy?—The oracles will stand.

Paul writes to Timothy, 2 Timothy 1:14: "That good thing which was committed unto thee guard, through the Holy Spirit which dwelleth in us."

The deposit of truth.—What was this sacred trust or deposit, this *paratheke*, which Timothy had received from Christ?

The reference, as shown in the context, is very clear. It is that body of Christian truth which was "once for all delivered unto the saints." It is the aggregate of truths or doctrines regarded as essential by all believers who are in vital connection with the universal or "holy catholic Church." Everybody knows what they are.

We stand for the objective reality of these truths. One of the most specious forms of current heresy is Ritschlianism, which affirms that truth expresses itself only in "value judgments." It reasons thus: "It is quite immaterial whether there be a God or not, so long as one believes that

way; since one's belief, as a value judgment, answers all the practical purposes of a God." A like attitude is assumed toward the divinity of Christ, the atonement, justification by faith and other doctrines. All truth is thus reduced to a mere matter of personal opinion; the foundations of authority are removed and practically nothing is left of the religion of Christ.

Divinely given.—The body of Christian truth, referred to in our text, was given by divine revelation. It is important to emphasize this fact, as against the view current in some quarters that it was evolved from the inner consciousness of men. We hear of a "Pauline theology" and of a "Petrine theology"; but there is no such thing. God himself is responsible for the truth and trustworthiness of what Paul and Peter wrote under his direction. Their Scripture, like all other Scripture, was "inspired of God."

He chose forty men, at intervals along a period of fifteen hundred years, whom he singularly "inspired"; and these men wrote as they were "moved by the Holy Spirit." To liken the inspiration of Isaiah with that of Milton or Shakespeare is simply to explain it away altogether. The least that can possibly be affirmed of those who wrote under such inspiration is that they were so guided and controlled as to be protected from all possibility of error; so that the product of their writing could properly be called "The Word of God."

A compendium.—The body of truth thus revealed was recorded in the book known as “The Holy Scriptures.” This Book is as singular, in the world’s literature, as the inspiration which produced it. Other books “contain” truth; this Book is true.

Not only so; it is a complete summary of all spiritual truth, so far forth as a knowledge of spiritual truth is necessary to our temporal and eternal well-being. Hence the reference of Paul to the content of Scripture as a “deposit” entrusted to him for safekeeping and for the uses of his life and ministry. “Abide thou,” he says to Timothy, “in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work.”

All spiritual truth, so far as needed for our guidance, is here summarized. It is all here in the Book. This fact is worthy of emphasis in view of what is being said about “progressive revelation.”

Do we affirm, then, that there is no such thing as progress in the understanding of truth? By no means! But all progress in spiritual knowledge

is within the limitations of Scripture; as John Robinson said when he bade farewell to the Pilgrims as they were embarking at Delft Haven: "I pray you, remember that new light will be ever breaking forth from the Word of God!" As there is no new force in the material universe, but new applications of force continually, so there are no new principles in the spiritual province, but ever new interpretations and larger uses of truth. The sun, which is our source of light and energy, is not changed to meet the demands of a progressive world, though there are many "new things under the sun," The Bible, in like manner, though elosed long centuries ago, was divinely adjusted to the progress of all succeeding ages.

Entrusted to the Church.—The body of truth thus revealed and recorded was deposited with the Church. Wherefore the Church is characterized as "the pillar and ground of truth." The word "church," or *ekklesia*, means "called out." The Church is a body of men called out of the world for the specific purpose of safeguarding and utilizing this deposit of scriptural truth.

The original germ or nucleus of Scripture was the Moral Law, or Ten Commandments, together with the Civil and Ceremonial Law which complemented it. God's jealousy for the maintenance of his Word is shown by his command to the Levites: "Take this book of the law, and put it by the side of the ark of the covenant of Jehovah

your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee." In course of time there was added by inspiration to this original nucleus a further set of revelations, and these together with the foregoing were known as "the oracles."

The Jews were set apart as a Church or "chosen people" for the express purpose of preserving these oracles and passing them on to the coming ages.

In the course of Paul's great argument on justification by faith, where he shows that Jewish rites and ceremonies had no power to save, an objection is interposed, "What advantage then hath the Jew?" to which he answers, "Much every way; first of all that they were entrusted with the oracles of God." This was the singular privilege and prerogative of the Jews; they were "chosen" to be librarians of the Word. And, alas, they proved false to it! They rejected their own oracles, and crucified "the Hope of Israel." Wherefore "their candlestick was removed out of its place"; and every wandering Jew in the world to-day is a living monument of the divine jealousy for the Scriptures as the source of revealed truth.

The Christian Church, as successor of the Jewish Church, has a like mission. To it are entrusted the oracles, for safe keeping, exposition and propagation to the uttermost parts of the earth. This mission finds its proper interpretation in "Missions." To save souls is a divine prerogative; but to disseminate truth, the truth of the oracles

through which souls are saved, is the business of the Church. When that is attended to God does the rest. A clear understanding of this fact and a corresponding zeal in Missions will bring in the Golden Age. When Christ was asked by his disciples for a sign of his second coming, he answered, "The end is not yet . . . the gospel must first be preached to all nations."

The responsibility of the ministry.—The body of truth thus deposited with the Church has been specially entrusted to its ministers.

In the Jewish Church the prophets were charged with the duty of safeguarding the oracles and teaching them. In process of time there arose, within their number a new order, known as Scribes, that is, transcribers and interpreters of Scripture. They professed to be "Biblical experts," able rightly to divide the word of truth; but presently they began to take undue liberties with their trust. And for this our Lord denounced them, saying, "Full well do ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your tradition." "Woe unto you, mask-wearers! Ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for ye enter not in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering in to enter." "Woe unto you . . . ye blind guides, that strain out the gnat and swallow the camel! . . . Ye serpents, ye offspring of vipers, how shall ye escape the judgment of hell?" All this because they had been false to their oracles, adding to and subtracting from them,

and thus setting at naught their commission to safeguard the truth.

The call to the Christian ministry is a divine call. It is a summons to the sacred trust of truth as contained in the oracles of God; and fidelity to that trust is solemnly pledged in its ordination vows.

In the early Church there were ministers who were recreant to that trust. Paul was moved to warn Timothy against those false teachers who "creep in" among the people to make shipwreck of their faith. He warned the young pastor against their specious inroads and enjoined him to be faithful, with pathetic earnestness: "O Timothy, guard that which is committed unto thee!"

Are there such false teachers in our time? It is an open secret that not a few ministers have insinuated themselves into evangelical pulpits where they, sometimes brazenly, more often with covert cleverness, undermine the written Word and deny the Incarnate Word of God. What care they for ordination vows? Common honesty is cast to the winds. "Oaths are but straws!"

What is the result?—The question is frequently asked, "Why are there so few candidates for the ministry?" The wonder is that there should be any candidates at all when there are so many ministers and theological instructors who reduce the gospel to *nil*. Why should a young man consecrate his life to preaching when there is nothing

to preach? In Germany, where the pulpits are largely given over to rationalism, the supply of candidates is less than one-third what it was forty years ago. In our own country there is a smaller but most lamentable falling off. Why? Inquire at the doors of Yale, Princeton, Cornell and other great institutions of learning, notably our State Universities, where rationalistic science and philosophy, "made in Germany," are taught in direct contravention of the Scriptures. Is it to be expected that young men will be moved by such instruction to devote their lives to a ministry which is consecrated to the teaching of Scriptural truth?

A further result is the breaking up of the foundations of public morality. Truth and righteousness go together. One who is more liberal than the doctrine of Christ is sure to be broader than the moral law. It would not be just to say that all "liberals" are on the wrong side of all current questions of reform; but it is quite within bounds to say that ministers and laymen who stand by the evangelical faith can always be depended on to support the sanctions of the Sabbath, temperance, the marriage relation, and every other proposition which concerns the welfare of society. When the question of opening our saloons on Sunday was pending recently in the Legislature at Albany, the State was ransacked to find ministers who would advocate it. A few were found; eleven in all; and there was not one among them who stood for the inspiration of the Bible or the Deity of Christ.

It is worth while for those who thoughtlessly declaim against doctrine and clamor for "ethical sermons" to remember that truth and morality walk hand in hand. There is no sound and dependable morality which does not find its basis in obedience to truth as revealed in the Word of God. To abandon that truth, as a whole or in any essential part, is to loosen the sanctions of right and righteousness; for "as he thinketh within himself so is he."

Where is the remedy?—The remedy is with the people. In the philosophy of the gospel it is the people and not the priests or hierarchy that constitute the Church. Ministers are called not to lord it over God's heritage, but to serve the people as their spiritual guides. The people, therefore, have the right to insist that their pastors shall be loyal to the divine oracles and true to their ordination vows, or else "step down and out."

And, having the right, they have the power also. It is recorded that John Knox, in a famous controversy with Queen Mary, said, "Madam, when princess do exceed the just bounds of their authority their subjects may resist, and with power!" The people of the Church have a larger warrant for assuming a like attitude toward those who minister to them in spiritual things.

The responsibility of the situation must sooner or later be assumed by the laity: for, as John Foster said, "Power to the last atom is responsibility."

And here lies the hope of the outlook. Whatever may be said of many in the ministry, the heart of the people beats true to the oracles. Lincoln was fond of saying, "You can trust the people." Christ said: "He that is a hireling and not a shepherd . . . fleeth because he is a hireling, and careth not for the sheep. I am the good shepherd and I know mine own, and mine own know me . . . and I lay down my life for my sheep." In other words, the saving factor in the problem of the world is the loyalty of the people to the teachings of Christ.

And this is a matter of individual responsibility. The Church is as the units which constitute it. Wherefore, it behooves every one who professes to follow Christ to regard himself as a sentinel in charge of the deposit of catholic truth. Let him stand without weakening, and defend his trust without swerving. Let him remember that to minimize truth is to compromise morals. We praise the heroism of Luther who said, on a great occasion, "Here I stand; I cannot otherwise; God help me!" But that sort of heroism lies within the province of every true follower of Christ. *Sto pro veritate!* Stand for the truth!

The oracles will stand.—Let it not be supposed that, in speaking after this manner, I have any question as to the ultimate outcome. The history of the Church, like an undulating plain, has its ups and downs. Just now the voice of infidelity,

silenced beyond the confines of the pulpit, is loud within it. But the reaction will surely come. God's people will assert themselves and maintain their rights in the safeguarding of truth. Paul says, in this very letter, in which he laments the inroads of error, "Howbeit the firm foundation of God standeth; having this seal"—like a twofold inscription on the sides of an impregnable rock—"The Lord knoweth them that are his"; and, "Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness." In that double seal rests our assurance of the final triumph of truth and righteousness.

HOW TO READ IT

Take, read!—It should be read honestly.—Systematically.—Critically.—Practically.—Prayerfully.—The unfailing light.

Take, read!—The most remarkable book of the fourth century was “The Confessions” of Augustine; the most remarkable man of that time was its learned author; and the most remarkable woman was Monica, his mother. She had dedicated him to the ministry in his infancy. When he left home to pursue his education she gave him a Bible with her fond farewell. As time passed, in the free-thinking atmosphere of the Universities, he suffered a total eclipse of faith. He wandered farther and farther from the true religion until he found himself in the cold region of doubt and intellectual despair. He was sitting in a garden at Rome, lost in despondency, when a child’s voice was heard in the distance singing a song with this refrain, “*Tolle, lege.*” As he entered the house his eyes fell upon his neglected Bible, *Tolle, lege!* “Take, read!” And, reading, his faith came back to him.

I wonder how many Bibles there are inscribed with these words by a loving mother’s hand: “Thy

Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path"? My mother wrote it on the fly-leaf of the Bible she gave me when I left home. I was going out into the world, away from the influence of home and the family altar, no more to be tethered by a mother's apron-strings. It was the best she could do: to give me a prayer and a light for my pathway.

Have you such a Bible? Where is it? In some forgotten place? On the top-shelf of your book-case, covered with dust? *Tolle, lege!* Take it down, brush away the dust, and read it!

But why read the Bible? Because we need light; and this Book professes to be a light for the journey of life. We walk in darkness—the darkness of sin and sorrow, of doubt and unbelief. We stumble on the dark mountains. He is a singularly fortunate man who, in front of the great problems that have to do with life and immortality, does not feel the need of a light to walk by.

But how shall we read it? That depends altogether on whether we believe it or not. You may not be a Christian; you may never have accepted Christ as your Saviour, or the Bible as your spiritual guide. In any case, however, it would be well to read it.

It should be read honestly.—You say you want to know, to begin with, whether it is the Word of God. This is its claim; and the only way to refute or verify that claim is to open the Book and

search it. But you must do that without bias. The Bible is entitled to a "square deal." So much is due from you as an honest man.

It is, however, not an easy thing to approach the Bible without prejudice in these days. The air is so full of anti-Biblical sentiment that a hostile bias is almost inevitable, in the nature of the case. In some of our theological seminaries the students are exhorted to read the Bible as mere literature. They are advised beforehand that its trustworthiness is an old-wives' fable, a fond mother's dream, to be put away with other childish things. Thus the bias *pro* is supplanted by a bias *contra*; and fair dealing is practically out of the question.

It is obvious that if there is to be no bias in favor of the truth of Scripture there should certainly be no bias against it. So much is necessary in the interest of common honesty. If any man will thus address himself to the careful reading of this Book, with a mind open to conviction, his verdict is a foregone conclusion. He will surely come to regard it as the veritable Word of God.

But suppose he decides that it is not so? Shall he then go on reading it? Just as he chooses. It then becomes a matter of relative unimportance whether he reads it or not. To be sure, it is the great masterpiece of literature and he would be wise to familiarize himself with its poetry, its eloquence, its philosophy, etc. But, after all, he will take only the same sort of interest in the Bible as in Plutarch's "Lives" or Shakespeare's plays or

“Æsop’s Fables” or the “Arabian Nights.” He reads only because he perceives that he can not be liberally educated without it.

But suppose that, on examination, the Book commends itself to him as the true and trustworthy Word of God? Then it follows that he must read it in a different way. As an honest man he stands now committed to its truth. If he be a minister, he must honestly maintain and defend it. If he be a church member he will find that loyalty to the Scriptures is involved in his covenant vow. The truth of the Book has ceased to be an open question for him. That has been settled. The Bible is no longer in the common category of books. It stands out, far and away, beyond and above them all, distinguished and differentiated by the fact of its inspiration. He thinks of the Bible as Moses thought of the burning bush. The desert of Midian was full of acacia bushes; but there was only one from which the voice called, “I Am that I Am!” So to the believer there is only one Book so inspired that God is its author in such a sense that it is divinely said to have been “breathed of God.”

So then he reads with a prejudgment in its favor. He reads because he regards it as a lamp unto his feet and a light unto his path. He reads not to discover whether the Book is true or not, but with the expectation of finding truth in it. It is his friend the Bible; and as a friend it clasps his hand and leads him along the way.

It should be read systematically, just as one attends to the common needs and obligations of life. This reading should be done at regular times. In the morning? Surely; for then we pass, alone and otherwise blind, into the unknown country of another day. At night? Without fail; for then again we pass into an unknown country where we are wholly dependent upon the care of God.

It should be read also in some methodical way. A good plan is to read it *seriatim*; that is, through and through, from beginning to end.

It should be read, also, by books and, not infrequently, a book at a sitting. Does that look like a terrible task? Let us see. The longest book in the Old Testament is the Psalter, which occupies about sixty pages; not nearly so long as Spenser's "Faery Queen." The longest book in the New Testament is the Gospel of Luke, which is about the length of one of Shakespeare's plays. The story of Esther is seven pages long, and the sweet pastoral of Ruth is three pages, neither of them as long as a short magazine story. The difficulty, therefore, is an imaginary one. The habit of reading the Bible in brief and choppy portions only is not calculated to create a proper interest in it. We would not think, for a moment, of reading other books that way.

It should be read critically.—The Bible is not afraid of fire and acid. When Christ said, "Ye

search the Scriptures," he used the word *eraunate*; a technical word used of a hound on the scent. It suggests a most severe scrutiny. And this Book is worthy of it, because the secret of eternal life is in it.

You ask, "What helps are needed to read and study the Scriptures in this way?" Get a Cruden's Concordance, a Bible Dictionary and a short Commentary, and you will need nothing else. But whatever helps you use, be sure you do not farm out your thinking to any other man. Be your own Biblical expert. Let no man take thy crown!

But, after all, the best help to the understanding of the Bible is the Bible itself. The way to interpret Scripture is to compare Scripture with Scripture. Use the marginal references for this purpose.

And form the habit of topical study. To illustrate: take the word "love" or "repentance" or "faith," and follow it up in your Concordance until you get the *tout ensemble* of the matter in hand. It was thus that Mr. Moody made himself the wonderful Biblical expert that he was. He came upon the word "grace" in a difficult passage of Scripture, and began to trace it through the Book in parallel passages. The farther he went the more absorbed he became. In his Concordance he found two columns of references to the word; and when he got through with them he was so filled with the subject of grace that he stopped the

first man whom he met on the street and mentioned it. "What do you mean by grace?" asked the man. Mr. Moody replied, "I mean the grace of God which bringeth salvation and hath appeared to all men."

In this critical study of the Scriptures you will find difficulties, no doubt. You will come up against many problems which will baffle you. Is that to be wondered at? Daniel Webster wisely said, "If I could understand the Bible with my finite mind, I could not possibly believe that an infinite God made it." Do not expect to solve all difficulties. Let it suffice that they are not against reason. The fact that they are above reason is nothing against them. Lay them aside as you lay aside the bones at your Thanksgiving dinner, not expecting to masticate them. Leave the dark and difficult things to God. Be satisfied to eat what is edible, and to apprehend so much as is necessary to meet your present needs and solve the vital problem of the endless life.

It should be read practically.—What you need as a follower of Christ is an infallible rule of faith and practice; and here you have it.

That means, on the one hand, that you are to believe what it says. It solves every one of the great questions of the spiritual life, and it solves them with a "Thus saith the Lord." You may not always be pleased with the doctrines which it presents or with its way of presenting them; but in-

asmuch as God's thoughts are not as our thoughts, our personal opinion must not prevent or abbreviate our loyalty to the Word of God.

And, on the other hand, as the Book is our rule of conduct we must read with the intention of following it. This is what is meant by the statement that "every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work."

If you take the Bible as it stands you will find yourself provided thus with a creed and a Moral Code; and these two are a sufficient equipment for our spiritual life.

It should be read prayerfully.—For, inasmuch as spiritual things are spiritually discerned, we are constantly dependent upon the Spirit of God. In our Saviour's final interview with the disciples in the upper room, he told them of the unspeakable gift of the Holy Spirit, who, he said, "shall guide you into all the truth."

The Spirit anoints our eyes with eyesalve that we may see. There is many a man who looks into Scripture and sees nothing but meaningless hieroglyphics. There is many another man who, reading the clearest statement of truth, is repelled by it. All this for want of the Spirit's eyesalve; for our natural eyes are blind to spiritual things.

I Cor. 2:14.

And the Spirit also illuminates the pages of the Book, so that to the Spirit-led reader things appear there which are not visible to other eyes. And the one thing which the open eyes of the twice-born man can clearly see in Scripture is the Name which is "above every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." To him the face of Jesus looks out of the oracles; his voice speaks in every truth and precept; his hands beckon in "the exceeding great and precious promises." Thus reading with prayer, he holds the key to the inner place of truth.

"In nomine Jesu" was the legend that floated from the topmast of the *Pinta* when Columbus sailed through the Pillars of Hercules in quest of Eldorado. In the same Name we search the Scriptures, in the light of the Spirit, for the hid treasures that make us rich toward God.

Let me end where I began, with the word that led Augustine into the light: *Tolle, lege*. Take the Book and read it. Read it as a follower of Christ; lovingly, because he loved it; and believingly, because he believed it; and practically, because he lived by it.

The unfailing light.—A missionary on the frontier was called to a farmhouse, five miles across the trackless prairie, to minister at a death-bed. It was midnight when he set out to return, and the skies were black and lowering. The farmer gave him a pine torch, saying, "It will light you home." The missionary said, "It is so little; do

you think it will hold out?" The farmer answered, "It will last to light you home." The missionary said, "The wind is blowing hard." The farmer answered, "Don't be afraid; it will resist the wind and light you home." The missionary said, "There's a rain coming on." The farmer answered, "Draw your cloak about the torch and the rain won't hurt it; be sure it will light you home." So I say concerning this blessed Book,

"Lead, kindly light, amid the encircling gloom;
Lead thou me on!"

And it will! It will lead you along the steep paths and through the deep waters and on past the shadow of death. It will light you clear home, to the gate of heaven and the City of God.

PART IV

**ITS ORGANIZATION: THE
CHURCH**

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PART IV—ITS ORGANIZATION: THE CHURCH

“A BUILDING FITLY FRAMED TOGETHER”

An architectural figure.—Christ the cornerstone.—The foundation.—The superstructure.—Growth organic.—End of the growth.—Living stones.

An architectural figure.—The word “edify” is one of the earmarks of Paul’s philosophy. It presents an architectural figure meaning literally, temple-building. The word occurs nineteen times in Paul’s epistles. Sometimes it is used with reference to the making of character, but oftener it refers to the building of the Church of God.

The Christians of Ephesus would readily grasp the meaning of this architectural figure, since they lived under the shadow of Diana’s Temple, which was one of the seven Wonders of the World. It was four hundred feet long and about two hundred wide, and was more than two centuries in building. Its roof was supported by sixty-seven columns of jasper. Its walls were adorned by Apelles; its high altar was designed by Praxiteles; and so secure was its sanctuary that kings were wont to deposit their valuables there. Alexander offered the spoils of an Eastern campaign for the privilege of inscribing

his name above one of its portals, and was refused. Its dome was surmounted by a colossal statue of Diana, which caught the sunlight of each morning on a golden shield.

In the neighborhood of this temple and within hearing of its elaborate worship, dwelt a humble body of believers in Christ. They were "a feeble folk like the cronies." To them the apostle writes: Be of good courage! ye are the living parts of a grander sanctuary, whose glory shall endure when the walls of the temple of great Diana shall have crumbled to dust. For ye are "built upon the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy Temple in the Lord."

In this passage we have a fine illustration of Paul's singular power of condensation. Here is ecclesiology in a nutshell. The text naturally falls apart; and in its five particulars we have a comprehensive monograph of the philosophy of the Church as a spiritual house, "a house not made with hands."

Christ the Cornerstone.—A few years ago the engineers of the Palestine Exploration Fund, by sinking shafts and opening galleries along the walls of the ancient Temple, came upon its primitive foundations seventy feet below the surface of the ground. At its lowest angle they found a stone four feet thick and fourteen broad, which they re-

garded, not without reason, as the primitive cornerstone. To their minds it was not improbable that this was the very stone which Isaiah had in mind when he uttered the Messianic prophecy, "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone." It was known as "the binder," because of its obvious relation to the connecting walls. And this is precisely the relation of Christ to his Church; in whom "each several building is fitly framed together."

The change from "the whole building" to "each several building" in the Revised Version brings out the fact of unity in diversity. The Church is made up of denominations, as a building is composed of its several parts; but observe, each of the several parts rests on Christ.

So the Cornerstone becomes a touchstone of denominational legitimacy. The fact that any denomination calls itself "Christian" is of little or no significance. The question is, Does it accept Christ as Prophet, Priest and King? Does it receive salvation from him as the only Priest, its creed from him as the only Prophet, and its orders from him as the only King? If it be "broader" than Christ, it cannot rest upon him.

And Christ is also made the touchstone of ecclesiastical unity. We hear much sentimental vamping, in these days, about the union of Christians, Jews, Moslems, Unitarians, et cetera, in one great fellowship; and this is alleged to be in pur-

suance of the prayer of Jesus "that they may all be one." It is, in truth, the very opposite of the spirit of Christ. He had no thought in his sacerdotal prayer of any possible union of friends and foes, but of such only as believe in him. He did not pray "that they may all be one"; but he did pray thus: "That they may all be one even as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee; that they also may be in us." The basis of union, therefore, as marked out by the Master, is a vital and sympathetic oneness which finds its analogy in the hypostatic union of the Son with the Father and which rests on a cordial and absolute acceptance of Him as the only-begotten Son of God.

The purpose of the Church is to establish the kingdom of Jesus Christ on earth. To this end its ministry was ordained and commissioned: "Go ye into all the world and declare the evangel." This is the message of the Gospel—"Christ and him crucified." Nothing else? Nothing else. Whatever the preacher's theme, it must serve as a thoroughfare leading to Christ. "Jews ask for signs and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, unto Jews a stumbling-block, and unto Gentiles foolishness; but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." No man can be a truly ordained and authenticated minister of Christ who does not make it his supreme business to magnify Christ's name and to exalt it above every other which is named in heaven or on earth; as he

himself said, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto myself."

And by the same token no man is a true and sincere member of the Christian Church whose life is not hid with Christ in God. The Christian religion is purely, in its last reduction, a personal relation with Christ. The Christian accepts him as his sacrifice for sin, abides in him as the branch abides in the vine, imitates him in the building of character, follows him in the path of daily duty, and is so vitally joined with him that he can say,

"My Lord, my life, my sacrifice,
My Saviour and my all!"

The foundation of the Church is "the apostles and prophets"—a phrase used to designate the Scripture. In the Old Testament the prophets pointed forward to Christ; in the New Testament the apostles make record of his atonement as an accomplished fact; and the twofold Book is a complete revelation of the divine word and will.

I wonder whether those who are engaged in undermining the popular faith in the Scriptures are aware of what they are doing? "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?"

The creed of the Church is derived solely from the Scriptures as the Word of God. The only Christ we have is the Christ there revealed to us. He said, "Search the Scriptures, . . . for these are they which testify of me." To impair their credibility is, therefore, to impugn the veracity of

the only historic witnesses to the religion of Christ. If the truth of the Scriptures could be successfully assailed, we should be left mourning, like the Magdalene at the empty tomb: "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb and we know not where they have laid him."

The moral code of the Church is also derived from the Scriptures. It is briefly contained in two great ethical symbols, to wit, the Decalogue and the Sermon on the Mount, to which must be added the personal example of Jesus as the Ideal Man. If the integrity of the Scriptures were to be destroyed, our Christian morality would have no better basis than that of the Hindus and Moham-medans. John Knox spoke truly when, being admonished of the wrath of Queen Mary, as he was going to Holyrood, with a blue Genevan cloak over his shoulder and a Bible under his arm, he replied, "All hell cannot prevail against the man that hath in his left hand a candle to illuminate his right!" But suppose that candle be put out, what then?

The very franchise of the Church's life is derived from the Scriptures. It has no other *raison d'être*. Its sole business is to propagate the Word for the conversion of the world; as it is written, "My word . . . shall not return unto me void; but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." We are asked derisively, "Is Christianity, then, a religion of a book?" It is certainly the religion of

the Book which records the Christ; of the Book from which we derive our only creed, our only code of morals and our only franchise of ecclesiastical life. Wherefore, we say to all who profess to be Christians, Stand by the Bible! Read it, search it, pray over it, love it, and live by it!

But, though we thus speak, we know that the Bible is in no danger. It is as Gladstone said, "the impregnable rock"; more impregnable than Gibraltar, which the fleets of centuries have bombarded in vain. No, the Bible is in no danger; but there is danger that multitudes will suffer shipwreck by following the leadership of those who speciously assail it. And there is danger that such false teachers will themselves fall under the denunciation of Christ: "It is impossible but that occasions of stumbling should come; but woe unto him through whom they come! It were well for him if a millstone were hanged about his neck and he were thrown into the sea."

The superstructure of the Church is its living membership. This thought is expressed by Peter where he says, "Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house." This expression, "living stones," is a singular one.

It is recorded that on one occasion, as Jesus was going out of the Temple, his disciples said, "Teacher, behold, what manner of stones and what manner of buildings!" Wonderful, indeed, were the stones of that Temple. Josephus says in his "An-

tiquities" that some of them were twenty-five cubits by twelve; that is forty by twenty feet. By what engineering skill were those ponderous masses lifted into place? Wonderful stones! But the stones in God's spiritual Temple are more wonderful, for they are endowed with life. The bricks of the ruined temples of Nineveh are marked with the cartouches of contemporary kings; but the stones of this Temple have been touched by God's finger and thrilled through and through with the electric power of his life.

This means that Christians must do something more than merely lie in their places. It means that Church-membership is more than a name on a roster. It means that the church is devoted to something more than the letter of truth or liturgical forms or ethical precepts. "I came," said Christ, "that they may have life and may have it abundantly." And again, "You did he make alive who were dead through your trespasses and sins."

In one of Ruskin's lectures he defines architecture as "frozen music." But this is not true of the architecture of the Church. The stones of this Temple have hearts that pulsate with divine love; they have hands stretched forth in mutual service; they have voices that sing, "All hail the power of Jesus' name," and, "Blest be the tie that binds!" They have hearts beating in quick response to the world's need, hands to help the helpless, and voices calling like those of life-savers from the shore on a stormy night, "Throw out the life-line!" Frozen

music? Ah, no! What a picture of a living Church is here! Every part of this great superstructure palpitates with life.

Growth organic.—The Church, thus constituted, “groweth,” as Paul expresses it. The word is not such as was customarily used of mere accretion, as when a fabric grows, thread upon thread, in the loom; or as when a palace grows, stone by stone; but it has reference to organic growth; that is, the growth of a plant or tree, by reason of life within it. It is, in brief, a word picture of the parable of Christ: “The kingdom of heaven is like unto a grain of mustard seed, . . . which indeed is less than all seeds; but when it is grown it . . . becometh a tree, so that the birds of the heaven come and lodge in the branches thereof.”

The growth of the Church is measured by that of the individual believers who constitute it. God’s life is the germinating principle. This is the influence referred to by Paul where he speaks of the whole body as being “fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, making increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love.”

But apart from the growth of individual believers there is a distinct growth of the mighty coherent unit which we call “the Holy Catholic Church.” The record of this growth is history. And the ultimatum of history is the coming of Christ to occupy his Church and reign over it.

The story of ecclesiastical progress has been constant from the beginning until now. We sometimes place our finger on a notable epoch of history called "the Dark Ages," and say, "Here there was an arrest." I doubt it. If you put a plant in the cellar it will not cease to grow, else it would die; but it puts forth pale and sickly fingers, reaching toward every beam of light that creeps through crevices in the wall. It was so with the church in the Dark Ages, when the clergy repaired to cloisters and busied themselves in the illumination of missals and breviaries, while the people were famishing for the Word. But there was, in fact, no arrest of growth, because there was no real cessation of life. And what a marvelous advance has there been in these last days! The numerical increase of the Church during the nineteenth century was more than during the entire eighteen centuries which preceded it. Thus "God works in all things; all obey his first propulsion from the night."

End of the growth.—The Church "groweth into a holy Temple in the Lord." This marks the consummation. The Church, notwithstanding its marvelous progress thus far, is still incomplete. One thing remains to be done: the Lord himself must descend and by his Spirit take personal possession of it. All hail the *parousia*! The Lord cometh! "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be

ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory will come in!”

The Temple of Solomon was completed in the eleventh year of his reign. At its dedication the priests and Levites, with the hereditary heads of the tribes, were assembled in the Holy City. The king sat upon his ivory throne, with his archers about him holding their golden shields and clad in Tyrian purple. The choirs and orchestras responded to one another in the Grand Hallel, “O that men would praise Jehovah for his lovingkindness and for his wonderful works to the children of men!” Then something occurred whereat all were instantly silent; a fleece of golden mist flowed outward from the Holy of Holies and enveloped all. It was the Shekinah, the most excellent glory. And thus the Temple became the Temple of God.

The time is coming when Christ shall appear in like manner to make his influence felt throughout the whole earth; when his angel shall proclaim, “The tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them and they shall be his peoples, and God himself shall be with them and be their God.”

“ Arise, O King of saints, arise

And enter to thy rest.

Lo, thy Church waits with longing eyes

Thus to be owned and blest ! ”

Living stones.—The important question is as to our personal relation with the Church. It is

not enough to say, "My name is on the roll." Are we living stones in the wall? Have we eyes to see the glory, ears to hear the evangel, hearts that throb in unison with the divine purpose, and hands stretched forth to accomplish it? You may see, on any sunny day, the benches of our public parks occupied by persons who have nothing to do. The city is awake; its people are at work; there are sounds of industry on every side; but these frequenters of the benches have no part in it.

The Church is the great living organism through which God is working by his Spirit for the restoration of the world. Its true members are men and women quickened by the Spirit of Christ. Alas for those who are in the Church but not of it! And alas for those who are neither in the Church nor of it! "My Father worketh even until now," said Christ, "and I work." Here is business for earnest souls. We are called into the Church that we may be "God's fellow-workers."

THE DYNAMIC OF THE CHURCH

The doctrine of the Trinity.—The Church the Medium.—Relation of Church and Spirit.—A Spirit-charged Church.—Partial fulfillment.—Failure of the Church.

The doctrine of the Trinity.—It is a mistake to suppose, as many do, that the doctrine of the Trinity is revealed exclusively in the Gospels and only dimly there. From the very beginning the three Persons of the Godhead are represented as being profoundly interested in the recovery of our fallen race. This will appear from a glance at the three divisions of the history of God's dealings with men.

The Dispensation of the Father was first, in which the Law, moral and ceremonial, was given for direction in righteousness. This law was intended, however, not to be a means of salvation of itself, but to serve "as a schoolmaster to lead to Christ." So we find in the types and symbols as well as in the prophecies of the Old Testament, a foreshadowing of Messiah who, in fullness of time, was to be wounded for the transgressions of fallen humanity, and a clear statement also of the influence of the third Person of the Godhead who

was to make application of that Atonement to the salvation of men. But this dispensation was ineffectual except as a preparation of what should follow; it closed in deep darkness, leaving "the whole creation groaning and travailing together" for something farther on.

Then came the *Dispensation of the Son*; it continued for thirty-three years and is briefly summed up in the words, "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." The teaching of Jesus emphasized both the Fatherhood of God and the influence of the Spirit. This teaching, however, though buttressed by the corroborative evidence of miracles, was comparatively fruitless. The Teacher himself was persecuted unto death; but in closing his work he breathed upon his disciples, saying, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost: all power is given unto me in heaven and on earth; go ye, therefore, and evangelize all nations."

And then the *Dispensation of the Spirit*. It began in power on the day of Pentecost when, as the disciples were all assembled with one accord in one place, there came on a sudden the sound of a rushing mighty wind, filling all the house where they were sitting; and cloven tongues of fire rested upon them; and they were filled with the Holy Ghost and power. So was ushered in the third of the grand divisions of history, under which we are living, of which the Third Person of the Godhead is the Executive, and which is to continue until "the end of the present order of things."

The Church the medium.—The medium through which the influence of the Holy Ghost is communicated is the Church; the living organism which he is employing continuously and progressively in bringing about "the restoration of all things" and ushering in the Golden Age.

One of the most significant symbols of the Church is the golden candlestick. It is used in Scripture on three notable occasions. First, in the vision of Moses, where God said, "Thou shalt make a candlestick of pure gold; . . . the whole of it one beaten work of pure gold . . . and see that thou make them after their pattern which hath been showed thee in the mount." It was fifteen hundred years after this that John saw the same symbol in his vision on Patmos; but there a new and important addition was made: "I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the candlesticks one like unto a son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about at the breasts with a golden girdle."

Now, midway between these two comes the vision of Zechariah. It occurred in the eventful times of the restoration, and its purpose is clear. A remnant of the captive Jews had returned to Jerusalem under the leadership of Zerubbabel, prince of Judah, and had set about the rebuilding of the city. The walls were finished, in spite of all difficulties, including bitter opposition on the part of the surrounding tribes. This was followed by the restoration of the Temple. Beams were

brought from Lebanon and stones from the quarries, and the foundations were completed, when the work was suddenly discontinued. An unaccountable spirit of apathy fell upon the people. All efforts to stimulate them were in vain.

At this juncture appeared Zechariah, whose mission was to arouse the dormant energies of the workmen by assuring them of immediate success and pointing forward to the coming of Immanuel and the ultimate triumph of the Church. He began with a series of visions; one of which is that of the Golden Candlestick (Zech. 4: 1-7), in which he proclaims the divine excellency and power and destiny of Israel as the Church of God.

Relation of Church and Spirit.—The emphasis in this vision is distinctly on the vital relation of the Church and the Spirit. It will be observed that the prophet was very eager to understand the significance of this vision in detail and particular; just as exegetes and commentators have ever since busied themselves in the interpretation of the bowl and the lamps and the seven pipes and the two olive-trees. But it should be observed that the angel was not explicit upon these points. "I said, What are these, my lord? Then the angel . . . answered, . . . Knowest thou not what these are? And I said, No, my lord. Then he answered . . . This is the word of Jehovah unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit! . . . Who art thou, O great mountain" [of dif-

ficulty and discouragement]? Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain; and he shall bring forth the top-stone [of the Temple] with shoutings of Grace, grace unto it!"

Unity.—It might not be unprofitable to dwell upon the fact that the single shaft of this candlestick seems to designate the unity of the Church. All the lamps upon it burn together and commingle their blaze. It is true that the Church is a continuous body from the beginning until now; the Old Economy and the New are one, the followers of Christ being characterized as "the true Israel of God." All denominations of believers whatsoever, who receive Christ as the only-begotten of the Father, are one also; moving forward like the divisions of a great army, in different lines but converging toward the ultimate reign of Christ as King over all and blessed forever.

Purity.—It would furthermore be proper to say that the gold of the candlestick seems to signify the preciousness of the Church to the mind of God. The candelabrum was made "all of gold." Here is no superficial gilding, no mere outward form and ceremony, but the purity and solidity of thorough consecration. The regard of Christ for his people is set forth in the words, "Having loved his own . . . he loved them unto the end." He speaks of the Church as his bride, his martial bride; not employing her energies in self-culture exclusively, as one beautifying herself with powders and cosmetics, but "looking forth as the morn-

ing, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners."

Radiance.—And one might dwell, still further, on the high purposes of the Church as indicated in these burning lamps. What is the business of the Church? To burn and to shine. And the burning must needs come before the shining. It was for lack of an apprehension of this fact that the Church brought upon the world the dreariness of the Dark Ages. An unkindled lamp gives no light. The burning can only result from vital touch with God. The oil of the living olive-trees must flow into the lamps, else it is quite vain to be saying, "Let your light shine before men." The Church cannot shine of itself. A Christian has no power of self-effulgence; he can only reflect the glory of God.

A Spirit-charged Church.—But all such considerations are small and unimportant in comparison with the great lesson which was intended to be conveyed by this vision. Once and again the prophet inquired, "What are these two olive branches which are beside the two golden spouts? And he answered, Knowest thou not what these are? And I said, No, my lord. Then said he, These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth." Mystery on mystery! One thing only is made clear; to wit, "*Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith Jehovah of hosts.*" The great truth to be empha-

sized is, therefore, the unspeakable importance of a Spirit-charged Church.

Bowls and branches and pipes and olive-trees all merge themselves into this important fact, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit!" That is, the Church, if it would accomplish its great purpose, must be brought into immediate touch and kept in constant communication with the Holy Ghost. This was the meaning of many like utterances under the old economy; as where Joel says, "It shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh." This is the meaning of Pentecost. And for lack of apprehending it the Church has for nineteen hundred years gone murmuring, "O my leanness, my leanness!"

If it is true that we are living under the Dispensation of the Spirit, how vitally essential it is to the success of the Church and to the welfare of the individual believer that this truth should be pressed home. We dishonor the Third Person of the Godhead when we speak of him as a larger "it"; and we lose his blessing when we fail to remember that he is the Executive in human affairs and the living Energy of the Church; and that all our light and comfort, our growth in grace and usefulness, our peace and power are from him.

Four symbols of the Spirit.—The influence of the Spirit is represented in Scripture by four eloquent and prophetic symbols: wind or breath, water, fire and oil.

The wind is the symbol of life. We live by the

Spirit. It is written, "And Jehovah God formed man . . . and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." The man was previously mere plastic clay; but when God breathed upon him, his pulse began to beat, his blood began to flow, fire flashed from his eyes. So does the Spirit regenerate those who are dead in trespasses and sins; as Jesus said, "Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

The next of these significant symbols is water. It speaks of purifying and refreshing. I remember a fishing-town on the coast of Maine where the fishermen brought in their daily catch and cleaned it on the beach; and twice a day the tides swept in and purged the beach as clean as a housewife's floor. So roll in the tides of the Spirit, in the application of the Saviour's blood to purge the souls of men.

The next of the symbols is fire. It speaks of energy. The blazing orb of heaven is the source and fountain of all power on earth; it makes the wheels of industry go round. In like manner the Church derives her power from the Spirit. Without his influence she is as insignificant for the accomplishment of her purpose as a painted ship upon a painted ocean. But upon his baptism the lambent tongues of flame rest on the foreheads of her priests and people alike, and they are able to accomplish mighty things for him.

The last, and in some respects the most signifi-

cant of the Spirit-symbols, is oil. It sets forth the need of consecration. Oil was used in the setting apart of kings and prophets and priests to their several offices; and by the anointing of the Spirit men are still separated to be kings and priests unto God.

Partial fulfillment.—Let it be observed now that the significance of these symbols, as well as of all prophecies of Scripture touching the Holy Ghost, is as yet only partially fulfilled.

On the day of Pentecost Peter lifted up his voice and said, "Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and give ear unto my words: . . . this is that which hath been spoken through the prophet Joel: And it shall be in the last days, saith God, I will pour forth of my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: yea, and on my servants and on my hand-maidens in those days will I pour forth of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: and I will show wonders in the heaven above, and signs on the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke: the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come. And it shall be, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." It is obvious that this prophecy of Joel was not "filled full" at Pentecost. Where are

the "wonders in heaven above and signs on the earth beneath"? Where are the "blood and fire and vapor of smoke"? Was the "sun turned into darkness and the moon into blood" that day? Yet these things are to occur before the Great Apocalypse. A time of final and complete fulfillment is coming: and the miracle of Pentecost was but the beginning of it.

In those "last days" the prophecy of the wind shall be fulfilled. The world will then understand the vision of Ezekiel in the valley of dry bones: "Prophecy unto the wind . . . and say . . . Thus saith the Lord Jehovah. Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army." We speak of the militant Church as distinguished from the Church triumphant: in point of fact there is no militant Church as yet, nor will there be until the breath breathes upon the dry bones of Israel. Then shall they arise upon their feet, not an army of moralists, professors, sacerdotalists, but a mobilized host going forth, under a Great Commission, to subdue all nations as prisoners of hope.

In the last days the prophecy of the water shall be fulfilled. The rolling in of the great final wave of the Spirit will not be for purifying and refreshing only, but for the overthrow of iniquity and the establishment of truth and righteousness in the

whole earth. It will be as it was in the great catastrophe at Lisbon, when a tidal-wave swept over the city, fifty feet high, enormous, irresistible, submerging all.

In the last days the prophecy of the fire shall be fulfilled. On October 9, 1871, I stood by one of the bridges in Chicago and saw tongues of flame issuing from rising clouds of smoke and licking up all before them. Great structures of iron bulged and collapsed before the approaching storm. Blocks of marble were thrown into the air with sounds of explosion like a running discharge of artillery. The sky was lurid, and veined as with throbbing blood. A power beyond all human resistance was driving all before it. So shall be the baptism of fire, when God the Spirit shall at length make bare his arm, unsheathe his sword and summon his Church to the final charge in the conquest of the world.

The prophecy of the oil, also, remains to be fulfilled in those days. The oil of consecration—alas, I fear we know not the deep significance of it. Think on these words, "Ye are not your own; ye are bought with a price," by the precious blood of Jesus "as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." When we understand that and act accordingly, the blessing will come; the great millennial quickening, in which the impenitent will be brought to their knees as wheat goes down before the sickle. But wind and water and fire all wait upon the oil; as it is written, "Bring ye the whole tithe

into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house, and prove me now herewith, said Jehovah of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

But we are still waiting! Waiting? Nay, we are keeping God waiting. He is ever waiting and wholly willing to bless us. Oh that we were willing in the day of his power! "Make a circuit behind them," said the Lord to David when he was facing the enemy in the valley of Rephaim, "and come upon them over against the mulberry-trees; and it shall be, when thou hearest the sound of marching in the tops of the mulberry-trees, then thou shalt bestir thyself: for then is Jehovah gone out before thee to smite the host of the Philistines." We have been making a circuit for nineteen hundred years, and the sound of the footfall of divine reinforcements has been continually in the tops of the mulberry-trees. God goeth before us and we tarry still. And the world is unsaved, and the prophecies of the Spirit are unfulfilled, because we of Christ's army are ever going round about, praying for what we dare not receive, hesitant, doubtful, and unwilling to face the triumphs or entertain the blessings that await us.

Failure of the Church.—The one obstacle in the way to the full realization of God's purpose in the

salvation of the world, at this time, is the failure of the Church to realize its dependence on the Holy Ghost. And we as constituent members of that Church must hold ourselves responsible. It is not numbers we need, since God can conquer with many or few. It is not more organization that we need, but the power of the Spirit pervading the organism as in Ezekiel's vision of "wheels within wheels." We who preach the gospel need to keep ourselves in constant touch with the Spirit, that we may utter "breathing thoughts in words that burn." The people need the Spirit, that they may no longer be singing, "Dear Lord, and shall we ever live at this poor dying rate?" but rather, "Give to the winds thy fears!" The local Church needs it, in order that, like that humble company of Christians in Ephesus who had known only the baptism of John, it may under the baptism of the Holy Ghost awake to new zeal, high purpose and holy aspiration. The universal Church needs it, that God may no longer be kept waiting for the realization of his redemptive plan. The world needs it, groaning and travailing together until now.

Oh, for the complete fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel! Oh, for the "wonders in heaven above," and oh, for the "signs on the earth beneath"! Come, Holy Spirit, come! Fulfill in us the prophecy of the wind and the water, of the fire and the oil, that thy mighty purpose may be brought to pass, that thy people may be made willing to labor

together with thee in the bringing in of that ultimate "restoration of all things," when none shall need to say, "Know thou the Lord"; but every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is the Christ; and when the glory of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea!

A MOBILIZED CHURCH

Appointing the Seventy.—His friends.—Under commission.—Disencumbered.—Fully equipped.—Comrades.—Enheartened with great promises.—“Before his face.”—End of the campaign.

Appointing the Seventy.—It was in October of the last year of our Lord’s ministry. He had carried on his work in the north country for a period of eighteen months or thereabouts; and there was apparently little or nothing to show for it. He had been rejected on every side; as it is written, “He came unto his own, and his own received him not.” In Capernaum the people turned a deaf ear to his message of grace. In Gadara they “besought him that he would depart from their borders.” At Nazareth, his townsmen plotted against him. So turning his face southward he began his memorable journey to Jerusalem and his passion.

This has been called “the retreat from Galilee.” Was it, then, like the retreat of Napoleon from Moscow; when the great captain rode alone, gloomy and morose, followed by the pathetic remnant of his shattered army? Not so. This was an advance all along the line. The light of progress was in the Leader’s eyes. Calm and hopeful

he gave the signal for a great campaign which was to eventuate in the setting up on earth of the Kingdom of God.

He had been accompanied thus far in his ministry by a bodyguard of twelve men; but their mission, however important in the formative period of the Christian Church, ended then and there. The so-called Apostolic Succession is as diaphanous as the stuff that dreams are made of. Now the field of operation enlarged, and the Master appointed the Seventy¹ to act as the advance guard of a great multitude who would march down the centuries declaring the unsearchable riches of Christ. In the instructions given to them our Lord struck the keynote for the propaganda of the future. These men stand for the mobilized Church; and their marching orders are the marching orders of all who follow Christ through the ages.

The order is, Forward the vanguard! Yet the martial figure is not wholly in place, since these men were sent upon an errand of peace. They bore no sword, but a benediction: "Peace be unto you!" They went not to war, but to husbandry. So have I seen men thronging the roads of the Dakotas, browned, tanned, stalwart men on their way to gather in the harvests that were to feed the hunger of the world. The Seventy go forth with

¹ It is worthy of note, that, as the twelve apostles correspond to the twelve princes of the tribes of Israel, so the Seventy correspond to the Seventy Elders who were appointed by Moses to co-operate with him.

sickles in hand, in pursuance of their Master's word: "Say not ye, There are yet four months and then cometh the harvest? . . . Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white already unto harvest." Go, reap for God!

His friends.—Observe this. All of these Seventy were friends and followers of Christ. They had heard him say, "Come!" and had left all to follow him. Everybody knew them to be his disciples. This is the first qualification for service: to hear the invitation of Christ and to heed it and to come out into the open, enlisting under Christ's banner and putting on the uniform of a confessed soldier of Jesus.

Under commission.—They had not only heard Christ say, "Come!" but they had heard him say, "Go!" They were missionaries, that is, sent-ones; as he said, "Behold, I send you."

The service of Christ is business. It means more than the saying of prayers and the singing of psalms. The Lord said, "After this manner therefore pray ye, Our Father who art in heaven . . . Thy kingdom come." And here he adds, "As you go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand!" The praying and the saying go together; the profession must be followed by the preaching of the Kingdom of God.

Disencumbered.—He said, "Carry no purse, no wallet, no shoes." No doubt they would have

deemed it wise to take a little ready cash, some provisions in their wallet and a pair of extra sandals for so long a journey: but they were to be an army without a commissariat. They were to march under a banner bearing this device: a bunch of lilies, and over it the legend, "Have faith in God."

Are we to follow these instructions to the letter in these days? "The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life." But did ever a man go forth to service, trusting God in vain? Is not history full of stories of those who going out, like Paul, Francis Xavier, John Eliot, Henry Martin and Adoniram Judson, without purse, wallet or extra sandals, have returned in due time with rejoicing, bringing their sheaves with them?

In one of Paul's letters to Timothy he says: "No soldier on service entangleth himself with the affairs of this life." Yet how many of the servants of Christ are overburdened with secular cares; all tangled up in their purses, and their wallets, and their extra sandals. We cannot afford to overlook the fact that it is the disencumbered man who fights well, runs well, reaps well. The Mission of the Seventy was like a forced march, and there must be nothing to hinder it. The business in hand was so important that they were enjoined to "salute no man by the way." A salutation in the Orient to-day is a matter of much punctilio. If two Arabs meet in the desert, one hand is extended, then both hands are lifted, then there is a kissing

of beards; and on occasion all this repeated ten times over with voluble expressions of more or less sincere delight. There was no time for the Seventy to indulge in such distractions along the way. They went forth as the King's legates, and "the King's business requireth haste."

Fully equipped.—The Lord bestowed on them those singular gifts of the Spirit which were known as *charismata*; by which they were enabled to work miracles of healing; and he said, "Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall in any wise hurt you."

Do the followers of Christ have such power in these days? It would appear that these extraordinary gifts were conferred in the infancy of the Church for special reasons. If they still continue, as is claimed in some quarters, it is a singular thing that the whole world is not constrained to acknowledge it. The healings wrought by Christ and his early disciples were so obvious that nobody disputed them; while nowadays, when such miracles are claimed, everybody standing by simply lifts his eyebrows and smiles.

Nevertheless the work of healing in Christ's name still goes on. The skill of the medical profession of our time is due to the advance of civilization and humanity which received its momentum in the life and gospel of Christ. The Church has no such pressing need of practising medicine

and surgery in these times when hospitals and free dispensaries are on every hand. Nor is the ministry called upon to practise therapeutics, when the medical profession, a sort of left arm of the service, is following so closely in the footsteps of that Good Physician, of whom it is recorded that when the sick were brought and laid on couches along the way, "he healed them every one." I, for one, am quite willing to have the Doctors of Medicine attend to their task while the Doctors of Divinity address themselves to theirs.

Let it be noted that when the Seventy expressed their joy in the fact that they were able to cure diseases and cast out devils in his name, the Master said: "In this rejoice, not that the spirits are subject unto you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven"; that is, in the roll-call of those who were appointed to deliver the message of the Kingdom.

Comrades.—It is written: "He sent them forth two and two." There is a beautiful significance in this; "as iron sharpeneth iron, so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend."

A few years ago, when there were only three men in our Arabian Mission and they were stationed five hundred miles apart, a pathetic appeal came to us to send more laborers into the harvest because those on the field were so lonely! Our Lord, who knew humanity through and through, recognized this need of companionship when he

sent the Seventy out in thirty-five bands of two each.

Paul, in prison, writes to his young friend Timothy to come with all possible haste, because he greatly longs for him. Latimer, bound to the stake, speaks to Ridley at the neighboring stake, "Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man; we shall this day light such a candle by God's grace in England as I trust shall never be put out." Luther in the Castle at Erfurt, in the darkest days of the Reformation, calls to his friend Melancthon, "Come, Philip, let us sing the 46th Psalm, 'God is our refuge and strength; . . . therefore will not we fear though the earth do change and the mountains be shaken into the heart of the seas.' " So has the Church come down along the centuries in bands of two and two.

We are wont to sing, "Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love," but for the practical uses of service let us sing, "Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian work." Comrades all! Two by two! *Amici usque ad aras!* "Two are better than one; . . . for if they fall the one will lift up his fellow; but woe to him that is alone when he falleth, for he hath not another to lift him up."

Enheartened with great promises.—Our Lord did not disguise the fact that the Seventy were going in the face of opposition and persecution. "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of

wolves." Nero, Diocletian, Bloody Mary; he heard them aforesaid; the voices of wolves that were to raven his little ones. But "Fear not, little flock," said he; "it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom!" He foresaw the flagging of courage, the weariness of step, the dimming of eye; and he prepared them against it.

There is no room for pessimists in the ranks of this militant host. We borrow trouble without reason. We fret and worry because we forget that Christ founded his Church upon a rock and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. We see the kings of the earth assembling and rulers taking counsel against our Lord and his Anointed, saying, "Let us break their bonds asunder and cast away their cords from us!" and our knees tremble because we have not heard the laughter out of heaven. We have not heard the reading of the riot-act: "Kiss the son, lest he be angry and ye perish in the way!"

We preach the Gospel of the Kingdom. Did Christ not say, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened"? Did he not say, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field; which indeed is less than all seeds, but when it is grown, it is greater than the herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the heavens come and lodge in the branches thereof"?

They were but seventy that went forth then;

and behold, there are in the world to-day some hundreds of millions of people who profess the service of Christ! And this in spite of axes and faggot fires, in spite of foes without and traitors within. We preach the Gospel of the Kingdom. Make way for the King! He who opposes does but frantically and to his own hurt run upon the bosses of the shield of God.

"Before his face."—This is the way they were sent. On other occasions he preceded them, leading the way. Here they are not followers but fore-runners. They go before him like John the Baptist, crying, "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand . . . make ye ready the way of the Lord; make his paths straight."

The joy of our message is that the King is coming just after us. Maranatha! The Lord cometh; and blessed are all they that love his appearing. Though he tarry, yet will he come. The heavens will part asunder; and the tabernacle of God will come down among men; and he shall dwell with them and they shall be his people and God himself will be their God.

In the meantime we are sustained in our labor of love and patience of hope by the promise: "Lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world."

End of the campaign.—On the return of the Seventy they reported, with burning hearts and

flashing eyes: "Lord, even the demons are subject unto us in thy name!" They had never dreamed of such success. But he said, "I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven!" His far-seeing eyes, in that instant, traversed all history as if it passed before him in a moving picture. He saw the end from the beginning; the triumph of truth and righteousness. He heard the clanking of chains as the red dragon was cast into the pit. Thus ends the campaign. The Lamb triumphs over the wolves. Armageddon is fought to a finish; and the army of which the Seventy were the vanguard waves banners of victory.

"God works in all things; all obey
His first propulsion from the night.
Wake thou and watch; the world is gray
With morning light!"

So reads the story of the mobilized Church. "O Church of God, go forward!" City Missions, Home Missions, Foreign Missions, all are in line with the Captain's plan, and none is in vain. Alas, for the man who stands with folded hands in the marketplace! "All at it, always at it, all together at it!"

THE CHURCH AT THE CROSSROADS

One writer's view.—Many paths.—The way of salvation.—The way of truth.—The way of character.—The way of burden-bearing.—The way of service.—The way of companionship.—The way of life.—Not at the crossroads.

One writer's view.—I have been reading a book, translated from the German, entitled "Christianity at the Crossroads"; in which the learned writer lays down the proposition that the Church has no hope of perpetuity except in adjusting itself to public opinion and the Spirit of the Age. The world moves, beyond all question, and progress is a fact. Wherefore, they say, the old doctrines must be given up, and the old canons of righteousness must yield to more modern forms of ethics. Ring out the old, ring in the new!

As I sat with this proposition before me it presented itself in the form of a vision, on this wise:

Many paths.—I seemed to see the Church, the Genius of Christianity, standing at the crossways with a look of deep perplexity in her eyes. Of the many divergent roads leading into the future she was wondering which she should take. One of

these was called "New Thought," and another the "New Theology," and another the "New Ethics," and another the "New Religion," and another "New Science," and another "New Philosophy." Oh, there were many, many ways, and all of them new! But there was an Old Way, also, which had been trodden for centuries by the feet of a great multitude which no man can number, of which it had been written some thousands of years ago, "A highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The Way of Holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for the redeemed; the wayfaring men, yea, fools shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast go up thereon; they shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there; and the ransomed of Jehovah shall return, and come with singing unto Zion, and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

The journey of the Church thus far through the centuries had been along this highway; but now she stood at the crossroads, while hands were beckoning on every side to other paths. The decision must be made: which way?

And I heard a voice behind her, saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it!" I could not see the speaker; but I knew it was the Bridegroom who thus addressed his bride; it was he, the Christ of whom it had been written, "In whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing ye rejoice greatly with

joy unspeakable and full of glory!" And the bride knew that the Bridegroom spoke of the King's Highway; but she seemed lost in doubt and perplexity.

The way of salvation.—The voice said, "This is the way of salvation, walk ye in it!"

And I saw that at the entrance of the King's Highway, where there should have been a sign-post, there stood a cross; and on it was the suffering Christ. His right hand, pierced and blood-stained, pointed to the Highway. And the Highway was thronged with travelers who, as they journeyed, sang,

"There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains."

They held much converse with one another as to the great salvation, saying, "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us"; and their song was full of hope and loyalty and conquest;

"Dear dying Lamb, thy precious blood
Shall never lose its power
Till all the ransomed Church of God
Are saved to sin no more!"

As they continued their journey they rejoiced more and more until they vanished in a great light, from

which came faint echoes of singing, like the sound of distant waters, "Worthy art thou . . . for thou wast slain, and didst purchase unto God with thy blood men of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, and madest them to be unto God a Kingdom and priests."

But the bride at the crossways seemed still to be asking, "Which way?"

The way of truth.—Again the voice behind her said, "This is the way of truth; walk ye in it!"

And I saw that those who journeyed on the other roads all seemed to be truth-seekers. Each of them carried a lantern and a book. The books were called "Science," "Philosophy," "The Wisdom of the Wise," etc. By the dim light of their lanterns they peered to the right and left and seemed like blind people groping their way along the wall, some saying, "What is truth?" and others, "I know not."

The travelers on the King's Highway also carried books; but they all had the same Book, called "The Word of God." On its cover was written "AUTHORITY" and "The entrance of thy Word giveth light." And as they went on reading there came an increasing look of hope and satisfaction. I heard them saying, "I know!" and "I am persuaded," and "I reckon"; and ever and anon they said, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord. I believe in the Holy Ghost,

the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting, Amen." And while they seemed to rejoice more and more in the things which they already believed, they were still looking forward to clearer knowledge and more glorious truth; for they kept saying, "Now we see in a mirror darkly, but then face to face! Now I know in part, but then shall I know fully even as also I was fully known!" And all the while they gave increasing attention to the Book and showed a deeper joy in it. Then I remembered how it had been written, "The path of the righteous is as the dawning light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

And still the Church, standing at the crossways, hesitated to choose her way.

The way of character.—And the voice spoke again: "This is the way of character; walk ye in it!"

I saw, then, that all those who traveled on the King's Highway were arrayed in linen robes, which had been, when they were assumed, "fine linen, clean and white." But they were now much soiled, as if their wearers had often fallen by the way. And they were weeping, praying, striving and all the while growing farther from sin. Among those who wept I distinguished Peter, and heard him lamenting, "I denied my Lord!" Among those who prayed I recognized David;

and he was saying, "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions! Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity and cleanse me from my sin; for I know my transgressions and my sin is ever before me!" And among those who strove most earnestly against sin I distinguished Paul, and heard him saying, "I count not myself yet to have laid hold; but one thing I do: forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus!" All alike were confessedly sinners; not one professing to be good, only trying to be. And the farther they journeyed the more they grew in grace and into the likeness of Christ. The stains on their soiled robes seemed to vanish more and more; until as they passed into the great light the last blemish was gone! Their sins, which had been as scarlet, were whiter than snow. So they entered into the presence of the holy God.

But the bride at the crossing of the ways still stood irresolute and undetermined as to the right way.

The way of burden-bearing.—Again the voice behind her spoke, "This is the way of burden-bearing; walk ye in it!"

And I saw that all who traveled by the diverse roads were burden-bearers, since burden-bearing is

the common heritage of the children of men. And many of them groaned, saying, "My burden is greater than I can bear!"

Those who journeyed on the King's Highway bore burdens also; and furthermore each was under a yoke. But for some reason their burdens seemed easy and their yokes light. At the outset they spoke of "duty" and "obligation"; but as they proceeded they had more to say of the joy of service and the delight of doing their Master's will. I could see in the distance some who seemed as light-footed as Asahel; and more and more they quickened their steps, saying, "I rejoice to do thy will!" Their toil now seemed pleasure; and as they approached the great light they began to run; as it is written: "I will run the way of thy commandments when thou shalt enlarge my heart." And so, running, they passed out of view.

But the bride still wore a look of deep perplexity. Would nothing convince her?

The way of service.—Again the voice behind her spoke, "This is the way of service; walk ye in it!"

And I perceived that those who journeyed on the other roads were much absorbed in selfish pursuits, saying, "What shall we eat?" and "What shall we drink?" and "Wherewithal shall we be clothed?" There were some with muck-rakes, heaping up yellow dust; and many pleasure-seekers, whose laughter was like the crackling of

thorns; and others who were chasing after vanishing honors. Not all were unmindful of the needs of others; but they were chiefly concerned for their physical pains and ailments. All were alike in being shut up within the narrow horizons of the life here and now.

The travelers on the King's Highway, at the beginning of their journey, seemed also to be much concerned about themselves, their own salvation and their own sanctification. Their favorite hymn was,

“When I can read my title clear
To mansions in the skies,
I'll bid farewell to every fear
And wipe my weeping eyes.”

But as they pursued their journey they grew more and more self-forgetful and mindful of others. They were lending a hand to help the fallen. They were putting cups of cold water to thirsty lips. They were trying to do good as they had opportunity unto all. And while ministering to physical needs they were not oblivious of the life beyond; but kept ever pointing toward the light. And whenever one of them did a good deed, it was “in the name of the King.” It seemed to be their growing desire to do everything for Him; until at length, toward the journey's end, all other considerations yielded to a consuming desire to glorify God. And when they had passed on, their usefulness remained. They were spoken of as dead;

but I heard them still speaking. Their usefulness was perpetuated in their memory: as their Master had said, "He that liveth and believeth on me shall never die."

The voice of the Bridegroom should by this time surely have persuaded the bride: but she could not lose sight of the beckoning hands or turn a deaf ear to the alluring voices that called her to the other ways.

The way of companionship.—The voice of the Bridegroom spoke again, "This is the way of divine companionship; walk ye in it!"

Then I saw that all who were journeying by the divergent roads were alone; each planning for himself, doing for himself, living for himself.

But on the King's Highway each had a Friend beside him, a guide and helper and counselor, who kept saying, "Be of good courage; lo! I am with you always, even unto the end." (Ah, "two are better than one; . . . for if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow; but woe to him that is alone when he falleth!") Was any weak? He bound a girdle about his loins. Was any tempted? He drew a sword to defend him. Did any weep? He wiped away his tears. In the distance I saw the Highway sink into a deep valley, over which hung a gloomy shadow; and as the travelers passed into that dark depression I heard them say, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil; for thou art with me;

thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me!" And when they reappeared they were still journeying two and two, each with his Friend. So they vanished into the light.

I saw the bride now grasping her staff and looking with desire toward the King's Highway, as if she were almost persuaded.

The way of life.—And the voice spoke again, "This is the way of life and immortality; walk ye in it!"

And I saw that those who journeyed by the other roads seemed not to know whither they were going. It might be that there was a life beyond; but there was no certainty. The one thing of which they were assured was that for a while they were living in this world and they had better make the best of it. For perhaps death might end all!

But on the King's road all saw the great light in the distance, a light brilliant and dazzling above the brightness of the sun. And they were saying, "Here we have no abiding city: we are pilgrims and sojourners, looking for a better country, even an heavenly, and for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." So, staff in hand, they trudged on with their eyes aloft. They were not unmindful of their obligation to make this world through which they were passing a better place to live in: but their watchword was "The Kingdom!" They believed that by the spread of the gospel the Golden Age would ulti-

mately be ushered into this world, that the Tabernacle of God would come down among men, and he would dwell with them, and they would be his people and he would be their God. But they believed also in the Kingdom farther on; where the thrones are set and the King reigns in light and glory unapproachable; and toward that glory they directed their steps with ever-increasing hope. As they neared the light at the journey's end it was changed into the splendor of a glorious sunset. Great gates seemed to open wide; and a new song, faint but wonderful, came from the distance, "Alleluiah! For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!" And into the light and glory and music they passed. Then I remembered what John Bunyan said when he saw the same vision of pilgrims entering the gates, "I wished myself among them!"

Not at the crossroads.—I awoke from my vision, and the thesis lay on my knees, "Christianity at the Crossroads." Ah, no, said I; Christianity is not at the crossroads! It is not Christianity, but a semblance of it, that stands perplexed and questioning there. The bride is loyal to the Bridegroom. She has journeyed thus far through the ages along

"The way the holy prophets went,
The road that leads from banishment,
The King's Highway of holiness."

The Genius of Christianity is still true to the gos-

pel of Christ. On the King's Highway there are more travelers than ever, more Christians who sing, "All hail the power of Jesus' name," more Bible-lovers, more believers, more servants of the King! The number of the avowed followers of Christ throughout the world has more than doubled in the last century; would it have been so had the Church, allured by the clamor of public opinion, chosen one of the other ways?

THE CHURCH TRIUMPHANT

Days of visions.—A great multitude.—From every nation.—Saved by grace.—Saved by faith.—The first-born.—Rest in service.—A place of happiness.—In the book of life.

The early Church was like a flock of sheep huddled together on a bleak hillside with baying wolves on every side. The times were full of peril and foreboding, and Christ's followers faced death on every hand. They needed encouragement, and the writer of Hebrews exhorted them to be brave and strong, for "ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable hosts of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven."

Days of visions.—The Christians of those times made much of the life beyond. They had constant need to strengthen their faith by dreaming dreams and seeing visions.¹ To those who were

¹ The hearts of Columbus and his weary voyagers were cheered in like manner by their first sight of San Salvador. He wrote in his log-book, "It is the most beautiful island that eyes ever beheld. There came a fragrance so good and soft of the flowers and trees that it was the sweetest thing in the world. The singing of the birds was such that it seemed as if one would never desire to depart hence."

scattered abroad by axe and fagot, wandering in deserts and in mountains, being destitute, afflicted, tormented, how grateful was the anticipation of that final muster of God's veterans! Jesus himself had said, "Rejoice that your names are written in heaven." Paul had spoken hopefully of his "fellow-workers whose names are in the book of life." Peter had exhorted them to be patient amid their fiery trials in view of the coming glory whereat they were to be made "glad with exceeding joy."

Those were the days of apocalyptic visions. Listen to this: "I, John, your brother and partaker with you in tribulation . . . was in the Spirit on the Lord's day: . . . and I saw, and behold, a great multitude which no man could number, out of every nation and of all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, arrayed in white robes, with palms in their hands: and they cry with a great voice, saying, Salvation, unto our God who sitteth on the throne and unto the Lamb! And all the angels . . . fell before the throne on their faces, and worshiped God, saying, Amen. Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might be unto our God forever and ever. Amen. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, These that are arrayed in the white robes, who are they and whence came they? And I say unto him, My lord, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they that come out of the great tribulation, and they washed

their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God; and they serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall spread his tabernacle over them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun strike upon them nor any heat; for the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall be their shepherd and shall guide them unto fountains of waters of life; and God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes." Revelation 7: 9-17.

“ Who are these in bright array,
This innumerable throng,
'Round the altar night and day
Hymning one triumphant song ? ”

A great multitude.—Observe the innumerable-ness of this general assembly. Here are myriads on myriads; not a remnant, but a mighty host; “ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands”: as the sands of the seashore; as the stars of heaven; a number so immeasurably vast that, when they sing, the chorus is like the rolling of a boundless sea.

A young man once asked of Jesus, “Are they few that are saved?” He declined to answer, but said, “Strive to enter in by the narrow door: for many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter in and shall not be able.” Though he did not answer the question at that time, inasmuch as it was not germane to the matter in hand, he and his apostles

also, on other occasions, gave us clearly to understand that the vast majority are with God.

From every nation.—This multitude is made up of all nations and all sorts and conditions of men. It is a Pentecostal gathering of "Parthians and Medes and Elamites and the dwellers in Mesopotamia . . . Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians," bond and free.

And all are "assembled with one consent." There is no "color line" in the heavenly city. Philip the evangelist walks arm in arm with the dusky chancellor of Queen Candace. There are no social distinctions there: rich and poor meet together and acknowledge the Lord as Maker of them all. There are no denominational walls of separation there: Wesley the Methodist, who wrote "Jesus, Lover of my soul," and Toplady the Calvinist, who wrote, "Rock of Ages, cleft for me," join their voices in one harmonious song. The boundaries of nations are blotted out. Napoleon's dream of universal empire, which he never realized, is realized there. The Christ of Calvary occupies the throne, still bearing the scars of his atoning work, and hath upon his vesture and thigh a name written, "King of Kings and Lord of Lords"; while the adoring multitude lifts the national anthem:

" All hail the power of Jesus' name!
 Let angels prostrate fall;
 Bring forth the royal diadem
 And crown him Lord of all ! "

Saved by grace.—All in this general assembly are sinners saved by grace. There are angels in heaven and archangels who never lost their high estate; but the names of those celestial beings are not in this roster. Here are only graduates of the University of Repentance, whose diplomas are sealed with the red symbol of the Cross. Some are sinners rescued from the vulgar vices of the slums; others are sinners rescued from the respectable worldliness of the avenues; but “there is no difference,” since all alike confess that they sinned and came short of the glory of God. Are there any drabs and drunkards there? Yes. Are there selfish worldlings and avaricious millionaires? Yes. All were sinners; and all have come hither.

All sinners, did I say? Nay, there is not a sinner among them! All are saints, arrayed in fine linen, clean and white. Their sins are gone! Though they were as scarlet, they are white as snow! They have been washed in the blood of the Lamb. Such is the wonderful alchemy of grace.

The song of the angels is “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!” but the song of the redeemed is “Worthy art thou, . . . for thou wast slain, and didst purchase unto God with thy blood men of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and madest them to be unto our God a kingdom and priests.”

Are there any moralists there? Not one! Not one who came hither by personal desert, but only such as have claimed by faith the unmerited grace of God.

Saved by faith.—This general assembly is made up of “solifidians”; an old word, signifying “only by faith.” In other words, they are all saved by believing in Christ.

So then their salvation depended on some doing of their own? Surely. But what about election? If the names of the redeemed were written in this book before the foundation of the world, how could they have been saved by the exercise of their free will?

It does not devolve upon me to reconcile the divine sovereignty with the freedom of the human will. The facts in the case are sufficiently clear. On the one hand, if there is a God anywhere in the universe he must know and foreknow all things: and it is unthinkable that anything should come to pass except as he foreknew it. On the other hand, my personal consciousness leaves no room for any possible doubt as to the freedom of my will. Suppose I say, “I will lift my hand.” It is clear that what I am about to do was divinely foreknown and therefore certain to come to pass. What shall I say then? That I am not free to either lift my hand or refrain from lifting it? That is preposterous. I know that I can do as I please; and I know equally well that whatever I decide to do was foreknown and foreordained of God. Why should I be required or expected to reconcile these facts? I am persuaded that there is an omniscient God; and I am equally sure that I have a sovereign will. I am under no more ob-

ligation to reconcile these two than I am to explain ten thousand mysteries all about me.

The important fact is this: if I am ever saved, it will be by the exercise of personal faith; yet will I join with the innumerable company of the redeemed in ascribing all the glory to God. "Where then is the glorying? It is excluded. By what manner of law? of works? Nay; but by a law of faith." For God "saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before times eternal," in whom he "made us alive together with Christ . . . and raised us up with him, and made us sit with him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus; that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in kindness toward us."

The firstborn.—All in this general assembly are "firstborn." This is singular. In any earthly household there is one firstborn and only one; and all the rights of primogeniture belong to him. In God's household, however, the rights of primogeniture belong alike to all. This is by virtue of the fact that the redeemed are in vital relations with God's only-begotten Son. They are received into the family by adoption; but he is there by the right of eternal generation, as "the firstborn among many brethren." It is through him that all the redeemed are invested with the best robe and the signet ring: as it is written, "The Spirit himself

bearcth witness with our spirit that we are children of God: and if children then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him that we may be also glorified with him."

Rest in service.—All are in "holy orders" there. There is no distinctive call to the ministry: as it is written, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation?"

It is a mistake to think of heaven as a place of indolent rest; and no less a mistake to think of it as a place of selfish enjoyment. The redeemed have been redeemed for a purpose: as it is written, "His servants shall serve him."

" Service there is rest,
Rest, service; for the Paradise of saints,
Like Eden with its toilless husbandry,
Has many plants to tend and flowers to twine,
And fruit-trees in the Garden of the Soul,
That ask the culture of celestial skill."

Every one in that assembly is a minister with a parish. Is there room enough in God's universe to furnish parishes for all? Go out on a starry night and look at the myriads of God's worlds floating in infinite space: then look on, through the interstellar spaces, and see in the far distance a cloud of floating star-dust! Oh, there are worlds enough to furnish parishes for all! And

the joy of heaven will be most largely in the fact that all are busily engaged in congenial tasks, running in the way of their Lord's commandments and rejoicing to do his holy will.

A place of happiness.—Heaven is home. Heaven is a marriage feast. Heaven is an ingathering with a vintage song.

“Jerusalem the golden,
With milk and honey blessed,
Beneath thy contemplation
Sink heart and voice oppressed.
I know not, oh, I know not,
What joys await us there;
What radiancy of glory,
What bliss beyond compare !”

It is an unending happiness: for the members of that general assembly are there to stay. It is recorded that certain of the angels have lost their first estate. “How hast thou fallen, Lucifer, son of the morning!” But never, through all the ages, has one of the redeemed fallen from the omnipotent hand of the gracious Son of God. Wherefore it is written, “They shall go out no more forever.”

I have a friend whose home has been sadly broken up. He has said farewell to wife and seven children, one by one, and is left a lonely, grief-stricken man. He lives, however, in the inspiring hope of the reunion in the Father's house. Oh,

that blessed day of "knitting severed friendships up"! There is no *crêpe* on the door of the Father's house. No hearse with sable plumes rumbles through the streets of the New Jerusalem.

" No partings yonder!
 Time and space never
 Again shall sunder;
 Hearts cannot sever;
 Dearer and fonder,
 Hands clasped forever ! "

In the book of life.—The members of that general assembly are all recorded in the Lamb's book of life. Call it narrow or bigoted if you choose; it is clearly the teaching of Christ that only those shall enter heaven who believe in him. There are twelve gates, and they are always open with a clear welcome for all, but over every gate is written, "There shall in no wise enter . . . anything unclean, or he that maketh an abomination and a lie, but only they that are written in the Lamb's book of life."

Is my name written there? Is yours? How shall we find out? Each must ask himself; for "the Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are children of God." Each for himself must say whether he has accepted Christ as his Saviour and whether, in all sincerity and with a spirit of entire consecration, he is trying to follow him.

FORWARD TO CHRIST!

Truth.—Character.—Government.

It is recorded that when the disciples journeyed Jesus was accustomed to "go before them." Mark 23: 10.

In the forward movement of the centuries he is always in the forefront. He "goeth on before," leading all great enterprises in the march toward the Golden Age. The cry "Back to Christ!" is a specious but fallacious one. True, he is the unchangeable One, "the same yesterday and to-day and forever"; but his sameness is not like that of the impassive Sphinx under whose sightless eyes the thirsty caravans of the centuries pass by. His immutability is not immobility. It is like that of the sun which from the winter to the summer solstice adjusts itself to the advancing seasons, changing as the world moves on toward seed-time and harvest. Our cry, therefore, is not "Back to Christ!" but "Forward to Christ!" For he marches in the van of progress toward the restoration of all things. His campaign is the philosophy of history; the prophecy of his coming is the key to the logic of events; for he is destined to reign "where'er the sun does his successive journeys run."

There are three things that make mightily for

progress, truth, personal character and government: and in all of these Christ leads the way.

Truth.—All truth has value in his eyes. In Christ's advancement through the centuries the schoolmaster has walked beside him; and wherever his name is revered there schools and universities have sprung up.

It is, however, in the province of spiritual truth that he most manifestly leads the way. He came into this world to answer the question which throbs most passionately at the heart of every man: "What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" And his answer is the Bible, uplifted in his right hand. As the Incarnate Word he bears congenial witness to the integrity of the written Word of God. And with it he brings the warrant of independent thought. He would have all "search the Scriptures," with open mind and heart. Search for yourself and interpret for yourself. Do your own thinking! Let no priest, Presbytery or Conventicle do your thinking for you. Be a "free thinker"; not like the freebooter who sets sail without chart or compass upon an open sea, but within prescribed rules and along pathways marked out by the Admiralty. Sail free; but sail by divine chart and compass into the light of God!

It is obvious that we shall not find this patron of truth by retracing our steps through centuries gone by. The Christ of to-day is the same, yet not the same, who lived as a peasant in a remote cor-

ner of the Oriental world and made itineraries up and down among its villages. Eyes front, if you would find him! For to-day he is the Scholar of all scholars and the Teacher of all teachers, the Friend of all truth-seekers, the Scientist of all scientists and the Philosopher of all philosophers, the wisest of sages and the simplest of kindergartners, Master of arts, Revealer of mysteries, Light of the world. He who would keep abreast of the spirit of the age must follow in his steps.

Character.—The basis of character is a due regard for the sanctity of law; and for this Christ stood and ever stands. The Moral Law, as promulgated from Sinai, finds its best exposition in the Sermon on the Mount, its best compendium in the words of Jesus, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and thy neighbor as thyself," and its best practical expression in the Beatitudes, in which Christ outlines the qualifications of citizenship in the kingdom of God.

But he was more than a teacher of the Law; he was its best living exemplar. And next to him its best exemplar is the man who most closely follows him. The Church is the candlestick from which his light is diffused throughout the world: as John the Evangelist says, "I saw in the midst of the candlesticks one like unto a Son of Man." The law of the gospel is set forth in the word "shine"; that is, reflect the character of Jesus as the Light of the World. "So let your light shine before men

that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven." It may be said without a peradventure that the average Christian is far and away the best average type of morality in the world to-day; but it must be added that more is expected of the Christian now than ever before. For the world knows more of Christ and knows better what a Christian ought to be.

If we were to go back to find Christ as the exemplar of character we should hear his judge saying, "I find no fault in him." But that would not be the Christ of to-day. In the light of the advancing centuries the world sees him not only as one faultless on the negative side, but so positively upright as the exemplar of all righteousness that, going on before, he sets the pattern for the world in the building of the character that brings manhood into its closest alliance with God.

"The best of men that e'er wore flesh about him
Was a sufferer, a calm, meek, patient, loving spirit;
The first true gentle-man that ever breathed!"

Thus going on before he leads the way for all who would make the most of themselves and lend a hand to the ascent of man.

Government.—The greatest of all political manifestoes is that of Jesus when, looking on the tribute penny, he said, "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's and unto God the things that are God's." It was this penny tax that enabled Cæsar

to build the elaborate system of roads which connected his capital with the remote provinces. Little did he dream that those roads were ultimately to be highways for the propagation of the gospel.

One of the current problems of our time has to do with the building of railways in Manchuria, the motive being an "open door" for international commerce; but when they are built the missionaries of the Cross will pass over them into an open door of evangelization. Rome for Cæsar? Manchuria for Commerce? Nay, all and everything for Christ! It is thus that in the fullness of time the dream of Utopia is to be realized in this world of ours.

Let it ever be borne in mind that the ultimate purpose of the coming of Christ was to resolve the chaos of our sinful world into law and order, and to establish a kingdom of truth and righteousness among men. In that kingdom the world is to have its final Commonwealth, of which the fundamental principle will be the brotherhood of man as a corollary of the Fatherhood of God.

In that day Paul will preach again his great sermon of Mars' Hill, God hath "made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth." In that day the Barons who met at Runnymede will meet again and find no reluctant John Lackland to deny the principles of Magna Charta. In that day our forefathers of Independence Hall will rejoice to hear a universal acclamation of the truth that "all men are created free and equal and

with certain inalienable rights." There will be no "middle walls of partition," nor any wars or rumors of wars; for swords shall be beaten into plowshares and spears into pruning-hooks. The Golden Rule will be the Constitution of that final Republic; and every man, being at peace with his neighbor, will sit content under his own vine and fig-tree.

" Then let us pray that come it may,
As come it will for a' that,
That man to man, the world o'er,
Shall brothers be for a' that."

But while this final government is to be a commonwealth, it will also be a Theocracy, that is, a government of God. The constitution of Israel, "the chosen people," embodied such a theocracy; but that was only a foregleam, like a sun-spot on the mountains which passes and is gone. It will come again and come to stay in the last days. The King shall sit upon his throne; and the nations gathering about him shall see him as John saw him, "a Lamb as it had been slain." In other words, the King of the Theocracy will be God as manifest in Christ, bearing the marks of his passion. And every knee shall bow before him and every tongue confess as doubting Thomas did when, seeing the nail-prints, he cried, "My Lord and my God!"

He who would see this regnant Christ must not go back to find him. Hesiod sang the splendors

of a period of primitive simplicity and virtue known as "The Golden Age," which was followed successively by the Silver, the Brazen and finally the Iron Age, which marked the lowest level of the descent of man. In Milton's "Hymn of the Nativity" he holds us for a time entranced with the primeval music of spheres and angels, and then arrests our contemplation in these words,

" For if such holy song
Enwrap our fancy long,
Time will run back and fetch the age of gold! "

But time must not run back to fetch it; the Golden Age is before us. And it draws nearer every day. The century in which we are living is, thus far, the very best of all.

" We are living, we are dwelling,
In a grand and awful time;
In an age on ages, telling,
To be living is sublime! "

It is the age of reason; it is the age of humanity; it is the age of character; it is the age of spiritual dynamics. Not for nothing has the world been rolling around the sun through the centuries gone by.

The disciples, on the last journey through Cæsarea-Philippi, were right in supposing that Christ was moving on to his throne. The dream of sovereignty was premature, that was all. The cross,

with vast stretches of intervening history beyond it, was needful to its final realization. The handful of weebegone disciples who left Golgotha in the gathering shadows of that tragic day did not know that they were the vanguard of an advancing host that, increasing in numbers from century to century, with the red cross banner borne aloft, was destined to usher in the millennium with the shout, "Long live the King." To-day there are five hundred millions of people in the world who cry, "Hosanna to the Son of David!"

And Jesus goes before them. As the white plume of Henry of Navarre was ever seen in the forefront of battle, so the Captain of our salvation leads on to the final conquest of the world for truth and righteousness. Our watchword is, "Forward to Christ!" Follow the Leader! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord! Up with your hearts, O followers of Christ, and on to the Golden Age!

Meanwhile the disciples are still questioning, "Who shall be greatest in the kingdom?" Who shall sit on the King's right hand and who on his left? One of God's mighty ones nearly a century ago heard the Macedonian cry of the Dark Continent and set forth as a missionary to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ. His life was spent in the forests and jungles; and his mighty heart was moved by the horrors of the slave-trade which he called "the open sore of the world." He died in mid-Africa with not a white face near him. As he lay burning with fever a native asked, "Are you

a Mohammedan?" His answer was, "No; I am a child of Jesu ben Miriam!" He was found in the early morning, dead, upon his knees; and beside him were his last written words, "O God, heal the open sore!"

Are we asking who shall be greatest in the kingdom? He shall be greatest who, like Livingstone, has done his utmost for the King! In the day of the final triumph gold will seem but yellow dust and crowns but baubles, while he who has added a star to the King's diadem will be reckoned greatest of all.

We serve the Christ of progress: the Christ who is always yet never the same; who grows more glorious as the world in the process of time changes its relations to him. To see Christ, therefore, we must keep our eyes to the fore; and to serve him we must needs follow him. The man who looks over his shoulder cannot keep step with the advancing years. Old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. And the world is more and more "amazed" as it beholds the glory of the King of kings moving on—ever moving on toward the Golden Age.

“ Ring out the old, ring in the new!
Ring out the false, ring in the true!
Ring out old forms of foul disease!
Ring in the thousand years of peace!
Ring in the valiant man and free,
With larger heart and kindlier hand!
Ring out the darkness of the land!
Ring in *the Christ that is to be!* ”

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